The LOVE CALL

By E. W. SAVI

Mary J. Morrill

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By E. W. SAVI

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"Sackcloth and Ashes," etc.

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CHAPTER I

"WHOM GOD HATH JOINED . . . ."

IT was all over: the ceremony in the church that had bound the two lovers as man and wife, the wedding bells, the congratulations of friends and well-wishers as bride and bridegroom were stopped on the aisle on their way to the waiting car.

Everything had been as a dream to Judith Lovel —now Kennedy—from the moment of seeing Larry Straughan officiating as best man when he had no business to be there, even as a guest, for he was a stranger to all present and, to her certain knowledge, had no acquaintance with the man she had just married. The mystery of it was inexplicable, and the shock made everything else of supreme importance take second place in her mind. In that bewildering crush she saw no face but Larry's, uttered her responses mechanically, and looked like a sleep-walker. How had he managed it? How had he dared?

Later, in the aisle, when she yielded her cheek to

the kisses of her new relatives, his voice had asked, cruelly, if the best man was, also, accorded the same privilege. She, who knew its every shade of expression, could read the defiance in it—the intended hurt—and fell to trembling visibly. "Certainly," her bridegroom had replied generous in the security of his position. The next instant Judith could not forget the fervor of Larry's kiss, nor the emotions it had awakened within her; for it was the first time that his lips had pressed hers, and the caress had all his pent-up love and longing in it—with something of passion and despair, besides, and the will to reproach and wound.

On her way to the Kennedys' palatial residence in a popular suburb of Calcutta, where the shade of widespreading trees made the lanes cool and rural, she could bear the suspense no longer, and turned to her husband for enlightenment——

"How was it Gerard Bolton failed you?" she asked, unable to meet his eyes.

"He was—ill," was Hubert Kennedy's hesitating reply, while he exacted a husband's privilege of lavishing demonstrations of love and passion on her.

"But—how did—this—stranger take his place?"

"He happened to be staying at the Great Northern where Gerard is putting up for the present, and was rather decent in looking after the old fellow—they seemed rather pally—so, when he offered to fill the breach, I was only too glad. It was awkward at the eleventh hour, so to speak, to raise any-

one else, and Straughan is a gentleman—one of the best, I imagine. He arrived only recently in Calcutta from home—says he is traveling round the world. By the way—he must have been on your boat?"

"He was a—a fellow-passenger," said Judith who had arrived in Calcutta, the week before, to fulfill her engagement to marry Hubert. It was impossible to say more. Some day, perhaps, when she could bear to speak of Larry calmly—to look back on that voyage out to India with philosophy, she might confide in the man she had married concerning the man to whom she had lost her heart. Hearts were unaccountable things—unruly, and apt to be taken by surprise. She had done with hers the only thing possible under the circumstances, unless she wanted to be despised for a jilt and a weathercock; she had subjected it to the sternest discipline, turned a deaf ear to its pleadings, and done the honorable thing. Since virtue was its own reward, she expected to suffer a great deal before she was able to appreciate her virtuous and honorable act. For the present, she tried hard to forget that Hubert was a bad contrast to Larry, and to remind herself that, after the reception at the Kennedys' house, she would, probably, never see Larry again, after which she would grow used to her new life and, in time, be happy.

Judith buried her eyes in her husband's shoulder and said no more.

At the reception, while she was the center of a group of chattering women—all strangers to her though old friends of the Kennedys—she was called to cut the monster cake and the best man was at hand to conduct her to the spot where it adorned a center table, the admiration of the company. But the icing was hard—or her hand trembled so much that she was unable to force the knife downward till a manly hand covered hers and added pressure. It was a sunburnt hand, shapely and muscular, in keeping with the fine physique of the owner, and, again, Judith was mentally chaotic.

"Why did you come?" she asked indignantly under cover of the noisy conversation.

"Because I had to—after I heard—things," he replied shortly.

"What did you hear?" (coldly).

"No matter—now. But I thought it might be as well to stand by. You are alone. You have no friends in this city."

"What do you mean?"

No reply. The gay scene with its confusion of tongues and merry laughter, the toasts proposed and responded to, the wedding presents on view, created incessant diversion till Judith was carried off by the bridesmaids to change into her "going-away" frock.

"A perfect dream of a thing!" they buzzed about her—strangers all, whom she had known less than a

week, but who had been friends of the Kennedys, for months.

"You have the prettiest trousseau I have seen!" cried Hubert's cousin, the chief bridesmaid, while helping to disrobe her.

"And the most perfect shoes, ever!"

"I simply adore your stockings!"

"Heigh-ho! I wonder if it will ever be my fate to marry!" sighed the cousin. "I know what I shall wear instead of veil and orange blossoms! I shall have a hat—the prettiest shape! and trimmed with ostrich plumes, all drooping forward over my right ear to my shoulder."

"What an idea! You could have *that* for 'going-away', but a veil always looks *sweet*—only I prefer camelias and lilies of the valley——"

Judith allowed them to chatter enthusiastically among themselves, glad of the respite it gave her from trivialities, for she was thinking of Larry and trying to take comfort in the thought that she need never meet him again. He would proceed on his travels and she, remain in Calcutta to be a dutiful wife to Hubert Kennedy.

"Isn't she quiet!" said one of the girls.

"Don't disturb her!" teased another. "She's dreaming of *him*."

"She's thinking of that mysterious time coming when she will drive away with her beloved to the new life awaiting her," said the cousin. "When he

has you all to himself, the first thing he will say is: 'At last you are mine!'—they all do, I am told. If he does, tell him to be original for once!"

"Don't look so scared, Judith!" laughed a bridesmaid.

"I am not *scared*," said Judith, her heart beating irregularly. Now that she was securely a wife, she was growing desperately uneasy respecting the 'mysterious time coming,' and like a captured bird, wanted, more than anything, to make a dash for freedom. But, of course, that was foolish, she told herself sternly.

"Who was that adorable person Hubert picked up as best man?" the cousin asked while folding the wedding gown. "I hear he is a friend of Gerard's supplied at the eleventh hour because Gerard was ill. But who is he and where has he been in hiding all this time?"

"Gerard ill!" sneered one of the girls.

"Same old illness," laughed another.

"A word to the wise," said Hubert's cousin to Judith. "Just you put an end to Hubert's friendship for that young roué, Gerard Bolton. He's a rotter."

"I don't mean to interfere in Hubert's friendships," said Judith, "any more than I expect him to interfere in mine."

"Well, you'll be sorry if you don't." And meaning glances were exchanged.

"Hubert's all right—at least, he will be, now he

is married to Judith. He's jolly lucky, and I told him so," said a bridesmaid.

Apparently, there was some doubt about Hubert's morals? However, Judith was not going to be so disloyal as to ask questions. These were his friends, yet they did not seem to think great things of Hubert or his pal! While undressing and dressing again, proceeded, she was deaf to the talk about her, thinking of Larry whom she was so determined to forget.

II

Two years ago, when Judith was working at Slade's for an Art career, she met Hubert Kennedy who was at the University of London, testing his capabilities for the medical profession. It was the third profession he had tried and found unsuitable to his tastes, so that his people, in India, cabled for him to go out that he might work under his father's eye in the jute business in which Mr. Kennedy, senior, had extensive interests. On the eve of his departure he became engaged to Judith, and, thereafter, corresponded with her. She knew little of his circumstances or life in the period that followed, but judged nothing could be wrong when his parents consented to the marriage and allowed him to cable for her to go out for the ceremony, providing the means for her passage. Motherless, and dependent on a stepfather for her support,

Judith set aside misgivings and took her passage to the East.

But the voyage to India is not accomplished in a few days, as to the States. Thirty days of idleness and propinquity with a striking personality who had lived the life of a traveller and a sportsman, shook her out of her smug contentment in her own future, and taught her that there were forces in her nature that Hubert had been powerless to awaken. Shipboard life is a little world in itself bounded by sea and sky. Intimate friendships are formed—in some cases, to influence a lifetime; in others, to last the duration of the voyage and be speedily forgotten.

Judith found Larry Straughan who was traveling for pleasure, the most attractive and interesting of the ship's passengers, and when he singled her out for companionship, showing little or no interest in anyone else, she was flattered, then fascinated; for Larry had all the charm of Irish natures with a pleasing exterior to make him wellnigh irresistible. Since it was generally known that she was on her way out to be married, and wore her engagement ring on the correct finger, she felt she could afford to be herself, without raising false hopes in Larry. "Forewarned is forearmed."

When untrammelled by the necessity to guard speech and conduct, Judith's was a captivating personality. Sweet-faced, without being actually beautiful, she won by force of her naturalness and

the charm of her vivacity, so that the lazy days she spent with Larry on the liner were full of glamor for both. Each day was more delightful than the last, till matrons shook their heads warningly and whispered of there being "many a slip betwixt cup and lip." Judith awoke one day to discover that she was considered a flirt, and she shared her amusement with Larry whom she knew was better able to judge her than anyone on the ship.

Flirting was far from Judith's intention. Secure in the knowledge that Larry was not deceived, she treated him as a pal after her own heart, little realizing that, in so doing, she was deceiving herself. It seemed to her a most innocent diversion to allow Larry to provide her with entertainment, companion her, and make herself generally indispensable during the long voyage. "What should I have done without you!" she once told him, blind to the light that leapt into his eyes.

"And I?"—said he wistfully—"I am wondering how I existed before I met *you*."

"There speaks the Irishman!" she laughed. "Has every Irishman kissed the Blarney Stone?" Before he had time to reply she had switched off to another topic, realizing for the first time the danger of encouraging sentiment. Larrimore Straughan was quick to take the hint so that they continued, thereafter, on the surface as "pals," aware that the undercurrents of feeling were increasing in strength. If Judy realized danger, she was only

too anxious to ignore it, trusting to Larry's good taste to make no mistake.

But Larry's code of honor in the matter of an engagement was not hers. "While there was life, there was hope," for him; which he put to the test one evening under the starlight while the waves moaned sympathetically, and the wind sighed encouragement. The following day the steamer was scheduled to land its passengers, and self-restraint for an Irishman became, under the circumstances, an impossibility.

"Oh, why did you! why?—why? If you had only remained silent!" she cried. "Now I have lost you, and I so wanted to keep you as my friend, for ever!" Thus Judy, after his impassioned outburst.

"Judy, don't talk nonsense!" he cried harshly in his excitement. "Do you imagine that I could stand by and see you go to the arms of another man? I love you—I *love you*, and I want you more than anything in the world!"

"And I thought we were so happy!" she said in self-abasement.

"Weren't we? I have never been happier in my life, and you—your face has been all sunshine. Judy—say what you like, you love me—not *him*." He would have taken her in his arms but she would not allow him to touch her. (How vivid was the memory of that shadowed corner of the deck, the salt-laden air, the rush of many waters

beneath a star-spangled sky, and the gentle heaving of the vessel as she was "rocked in the cradle of the deep"!)

"I am ashamed—humiliated!" she had cried.

"Be a woman, not a child, Judy!" he returned sternly. "Remember, we have too many chances of happiness given to us in life, and, at this moment, you and I are faced with a fateful decision. If you decide to take me—give your life into my keeping—marry *me* when we land, instead of Kennedy—I know I shall be able to make you happy. As for me—it will be heaven to have you always mine. If you turn me down, you will never cease to regret it. You cannot love two men at the same time; and we love each other, however much you are trying to deceive yourself, for some quixotic reason, into believing that you care for him. What do you know of Hubert Kennedy? We know each other better in this one month than you know the man you are going to marry, though you have corresponded for two years."

"I must not listen to you!—matters have gone too far between Hubert and me—he would be cruelly disappointed—I would be a heartless jilt. I know how women are despised who do such things!"

"Isn't it better than to ruin your whole life and mine?"

"When we are parted, you will learn to forget"——

"Never!——"

——"And—in doing my duty, I shall find happiness."

"That is all you know about it. You have no knowledge of life, or all that is before you; you are a child in your outlook, echoing the sentiments of old wives. Judy!——" and he took both her hands and kissed them passionately, "——Is it nothing to you that you will never see me again? To me, the thought is like death! I love you——"

"Don't—don't!" she cried, touched to the heart. "I wanted to have you for my friend. We have been such good pals that I know I shall miss you terribly——" snatching away her hands.

"Only that?"

"But I must keep my word. I cannot be so dishonorable as to let him think that I am coming out to be his wife, and then—marry *you*! I should hate myself! He has been faithful to me—so I shall be true to him. Say no more—let me forget you have said so much! I am ashamed of my blindness and folly." Her eyes were full of tears—they sounded in her voice; but she hoped it was too dark for him to see them as they rolled down her cheeks. To save further argument, she rose and fled to her cabin where she entrenched herself till the steamer docked and discharged her passengers. Every note she had received, meantime, from Larry, had remained unanswered, for only thus, thought she, could she atone for the crime of her disloyalty.

After undergoing so much self-inflicted penance, she went up on deck, the next afternoon, to meet Hubert and his mother, feeling she could do so with a clear conscience.

In the week that followed her landing, while the preparations for the wedding, on a grand scale, were going forward, Judy tried to make herself believe that she had acted rightly and was already reaping her reward. Hubert was kind and attentive—though, sometimes, she wondered at his restlessness and inability to look her in the face as, she remembered, he used to do. His people were delighted with her; his mother could not do enough to show her pleasure in the prospect of having her as a daughter-in-law.

There were no other children, so that, by Hubert's marriage, she declared, she was not losing her son, but gaining a daughter. The Kennedys had many friends, but none of them seemed intimate with Hubert. He had one pal—Gerard Bolton whom Judy disliked from the first, a heavily-built cynic who drank too much and threw his money about recklessly. He had been successful in the share-market, and was said to be very wealthy, yet remained unmarried and contemptuous of women. Hubert's approaching marriage he swallowed as a dose of noxious medicine and lost no opportunity of making sly hits at Judy.

"You will, I daresay, get so fed up with matrimony after the honeymoon," he once told her,

"that you will be only too glad to let me take him off your hands. I know what Berty likes and will keep him amused, thereby making marriage for you an undoubted success."

"I think you are perfectly horrid!" she pouted.

"If you weren't so charming, I would say it is you who are horrid to steal my best pal," he returned with a thinly-veiled sneer.

"But I am not taking him from his best friend—you shall still have as much of him as you wish."

He smiled on one side of his mouth, his eyes looking like boiled gooseberries; for there had been a convivial party the night previous, and its effects were still difficult to shake off.

"Perhaps, I'll take you at your word," was all he vouchsafed.

Hubert laughed, uproariously, to cover his friend's unfriendliness towards Judy, and clapped him apologetically on the shoulder instead of taking Judy away. "Gerry's a sport! You'll find, Judith, that he'll make himself a doormat to you, yet."

Gerard Bolton said nothing, but the sneer deepened on his mouth and he retired to help himself to a whisky and soda.

There was a look of hungry yearning in Hubert's eyes as they followed his friend to the sideboard, which Judy interpreted for affection, and resolved from that moment to show her husband, when they were married, how generous she could be, and how devoid of foolish jealousies.

Continual distraction and Hubert's devotion lulled thought, and made Judy believe she had succeeded in conquering her feeling for Larry Straughan. She was, even, beginning to believe that her self-denial was going to be richly rewarded till her eyes fell on the Irishman standing beside the bridegroom at the altar-rails.

The shock—the glow that warmed her from head to foot—the heart-twist at the knowledge that she had sacrificed herself and Larry for the sake of a promise, were all too illuminating to leave any doubt in her mind as to which of the two men she really loved. Not to see the contrast they presented, she glued her eyes to the marble floor of the chancel; but Larry's splendid physique and handsome head were photographed in memory, making Hubert's shrunken chest and sickly pallor repulsive to her.

Hubert had changed from the fresh-complexioned youth he had been to a nervous wreck. They told her it was India. India had that effect on some men—Calcutta, particularly, with its muggy climate and late hours. When she had commented on the change with persistence, his mother had sighed and looked distressed.

"He will be all right now you are here," she had replied. "He has kept rather bad health——" which reminded Judy of the many lapses in Hubert's correspondence owing to "illnesses." India was accountable for a great deal. "He wants

looking after, that's what it is. I dare say he has fretted for you a great deal, poor dear, because his father was so hard to convince about increasing his allowance. However, he gave in, at last, when I convinced him that Hubert will work with better heart when he is married. I am so glad you consented to come, my dear," and Mrs. Kennedy embraced her warmly, after which she changed the subject to one that was more interesting—namely the arrangements for the wedding.

III

Judith shook her mind clear of foreboding and allowed her bridesmaids to assist her into the exquisite "going-away" frock, hardly conscious of the lovely picture she made in heliotrope *crêpe de Chine* and *toque* with pink rosebuds—slim, graceful, and the desire of a lover's heart.

Of her two lovers, one suffered acutely at the wedding reception while watching the other lose all sense of responsibility in the craving for alcohol that mastered him. Hubert Kennedy stood beside the table among a group of young men who made no secret of the fact that they attended weddings for the sole reason of enjoying champagne to the mast-head. Toast after toast was drunk—Hubert mixing whisky with his wine, while his parents tried miserably to appear unconscious of the scandal. Already, he was scarcely able to stand erect, leaning heavily on the table for support

while inventing excuse after excuse for refilling his glass.

The display of rich wedding presents served to engage the attention of those who preferred not to see what was happening, while Mrs. Kennedy retired to shed tears in the library, followed by her husband, who reproached her bitterly.

"Didn't I tell you what would take place?" he cried punctuating his remarks by shaking a large forefinger before her face. "The young fool! The unconscionable blackguard! What are all his promises worth? He is nothing but a hopeless dipsomaniac, and I told you so! But you *would* undertake this experiment—you *would*! Commend me to a woman for sheer dishonor when it comes to protecting an offspring. You should have let me tell her the truth!"

"He swore he would not touch a drop as long as he lives if we would only give him Judy!" wailed the heartbroken mother.

"Bah!" growled her husband contemptuously. "Hasn't he broken the 'pledge' before? What are his promises worth when the craving for drink is on him? Now, you have sacrificed that sweet girl, and all for nothing! I have a good mind to turn him out of the business. He is no good to it. Had it been anyone else's son, he would have been fired long ago! Damn the fool! Had as good a start as any youth could desire, and as good as cuts his own throat!"

"But he tried. No one can say he did not try! Ever since she started for India he gave up drinking —only to-day, with all that wine——! It was too great a temptation——"

"Sooner or later he would have broken out again."

"Why need we give up hope? Love has done wonders for men before now. A good wife might have more influence than you or I——"

"God help her with a drunkard for her husband!"

"At any rate, do something! Don't stand there cursing your own son for whom you have no natural feeling, but go and stop him before he goes from bad to worse. He has got to take Judy away —oh, dear, what*ever* will happen!"

"How can I stop him? It will only make a row and be the talk of Calcutta! As it is, we are thoroughly disgraced. People used to guess how it has been with him; now, they will know the truth, and they won't think any the better of us for having allowed the marriage."

"She might yet be the saving of him," wailed the mother. "Go, go! See what you can do. Judith is changing and will be down in a moment. Something must be done!"

Mr. Kennedy ejaculated a curse and flung out of the room only to meet the "best man" who appeared to be in search of him.

"Your son is drunk, sir. He is not in a fit state

to leave your house with the lady he has married. What are you going to do?" was asked quietly while a pair of glittering eyes betrayed a powerful self-control.

"The damned young idiot!" spluttered Mr. Kennedy.

"A terrible injustice has been done to the girl who came out, at your invitation, to marry him, for he has proved to-day the rumor abroad concerning him. He is given to these bouts—he is a dipsomaniac. She should have been told, but it has been carefully hidden from her."

"Who the devil are you to interfere and ask questions, I should like to know?" broke out Mr. Kennedy.

"She has no friends in the East—so I am standing by to help her. It seems, no one has had any mercy on her."

"Mind your own business," snapped Kennedy pushing past him and going to Hubert full of determination to use a high hand. It annoyed him that an utter stranger should take it upon himself to express an opinion, particularly when he had been so honored by the bridegroom, that day.

While passing through the hall, he heard Judith descending the stairs accompanied by her bevy of bridesmaids, and quickened his steps to the dining-room, followed by Larrimore Straughan.

Hubert also saw, through the open doorway, his bride descending the stairs, and draining the con-

tents of his glass put it down so violently that the stem broke in two. For a moment he looked surprised, then, gave an insane simper.

"Lucky devil!" he said thickly, speaking his thoughts aloud. "By God, Bertie, you've drawn a prize'n the marriage market! Confess, you're all envy-ing me, lads! Le's drink to Miss Judith Lovel—no', by gum!—she's my wife—Mrs. Hubert Ken——"

His father struck his hand aside as he was about to raise the whisky bottle, and looked sternly into his eyes. "You blasted young fool! Get out of this! Make ready to leave—the car is at the door and Judith is saying good-bye."

"Eh?" said Hubert stupidly. "Leave?—Dad's kicking me out of th' house—ha! ha! What a scream!—and I, a bridegroom to-day! You forget," he said, lurching as he laid a forefinger on his father's chest and tried to humor him. "I'm a bridegroom—she's my bride—my bride—hic—damn fine woman, Judith!—parents' blessing on the union—damn good simkin, too—Gosh! You've done me proud, pater. I'm a proud man this day——"

"Take him away," said Mr. Kennedy to a couple of men standing by. "Put his head under the tap. Fix him up, somehow, we've got to get him off before he makes a greater fool of himself."

The men linked arms in Hubert's and removed him, protesting, from the room. Meanwhile,

Larry, with a face as white as his collar, made his way to Judy and drew her apart.

"Judy—don't go with him!—for God's sake don't go!" he whispered agitatedly, unable to enter fully into explanations, for the guests surged into the hall to be on hand when the bride drove away.

"Why, Larry," said Judy coldly, thinking he must have lost his head to make such a mad request, "don't you be so foolish!"

"Good God! I am thinking of you. You cannot go with that—drunkard!"

"Larry! How dare you!" The next instant her attention was claimed by eager guests, and she turned her back on Larry not to see his eyes burning in his pallid face, for the sight hurt her. He was suffering—no one could doubt it—so was she; but he must never know it! Poor Hubert! possibly, he had taken a little more than he should have, foolish fellow! but it was a great occasion for him, and she was ready to forgive him the indiscretion.

But his cousin, who was chief bridesmaid, next seized her elbow and whispered agitatedly in her ear:

"Oh, Judith! I am so grieved for you! Oh, it was a sin not to have told you—but he has broken out again. What are you going to do?"

"What do you mean?" Judith asked bewildered.

"Hubert—he's *drunk*! he gets bouts of drinking, and once he starts, nothing stops him till he goes

mad—'D.T.'—that's what happens. You should have been told, but they hoped he would give it up—he promised; but, he is drunk!"

Judith felt the ground sway beneath her. For the moment, she feared she was going to faint, but she used all her will power to control herself and stood firm. As Larry was at her other elbow and hearing every word, she was overcome by shame and humiliation, but pride came to her support.

"Is he?" defiantly—"well, that will give me something to do. The sooner we leave, the better. No need to prolong the agony."

"You mean to say you will trust yourself with a drunken man?" exclaimed Larry.

Judy who feared drunken men more than wild animals, said she would trust herself with Hubert. "He will be all right, afterwards, and it will be my job to see it doesn't happen again." With that she hurried her good-byes, kissing the weeping Mrs. Kennedy on the cheek and whispering words of comfort. "He'll be all right, afterwards," she repeated, "Don't worry!"

"God bless you!" sobbed Mrs. Kennedy. "Be good to my son!"

But Mr. Kennedy interposed.

"Judith, my dear—Hubert—ahem!" clearing his throat, "is not well—he has been taken ill——"

"I understand," she said, looking him full in the

face. "It is the old 'illness' that so often troubled him before I came out."

"Ah—I propose," went on Mr. Kennedy, loosening his collar the better to breathe comfortably, "that you should both stay here to-night. I don't like to have you leave—while he is like this."

"Thank you," she said uncertainly, bewildered by the need to make a fateful decision on the spot. But the matter was taken out of her hands by Hubert himself, who, having "pulled himself together", in the way possible to a drunkard who had enough wits left to try to save the situation, came towards her, flushed and somewhat dishevelled, and took her arm.

"Come 'long my dear—Dad thinks I'm squiffy —hic—never was more shober 'n my life! ha! ha!" and with a nod all round to the company, he made his way down the steps to the waiting car, leaning heavily on her arm to steady himself.

Judith was too deeply ashamed to look to right or left, even when Larry's voice sounded again at her ear.

"Judy—you cannot go with him!"

"Good-bye Larry," she murmured, with downcast eyes. "I have got to go through with it, now!"

"Not if you will only say the word—remember —" as she was stepping into the car—"I shall be on hand if you want me."

No more was possible. He had not even the

satisfaction of knowing that she understood, for Hubert stumbled in after her, and the door was shut. A few young people showered confetti and rice after them and the limousine slipped out of sight leaving the guests standing awkwardly in groups exchanging meaning glances while Mrs. Kennedy wept on her husband's shoulder.

CHAPTER II

THE HONEYMOON

WITH a sigh at her self-imposed martyrdom, Judith saw the door of the limousine close and the faces of the guests vanish as the car rolled away in the dusk of evening.

Afterwards, she shuddered in memory of that drive to Garden Reach where Gerard Bolton had lent them his week-end "palace" for the honeymoon; for Hubert had suddenly lost all trace of the man she had once loved, and had become a repulsive stranger. Not two hours ago, she had driven home with him from the church and it had seemed possible to be fond of him and make him a true wife. But *then* she had been in ignorance of his miserable failing; his eyes had a look of intelligence and affection, his manner had been that of a tender lover, his mind had been coherent and sane.

Now, she could not bear to look at his heavy-lidded inflamed eyes, his loose mouth, and see the pitiful attempts he made to concentrate his attention on herself, while trying to bear in mind the fact that they were man and wife and about to

start on their honeymoon! The cool evening breeze, blowing in through the open window, instead of reviving him seemed to have the effect of a drug, for after a few minutes of foolish rhapsodies in unintelligible tones, he dropped against her till his head rested on her shoulder and he was all but asleep.

"M'wife," he muttered, vainly trying to maintain consciousness. "M'wife—shweet lil'le girl. Come—give us a kiss, Janey. You've got what you wanted—we're mar'ied hard and fast—hard and fast—'death do ush part,' is the ticket. Don't throw it up to me that I haven't acted fair and shquare—on the straight! (hic) Fair n' shquare, I tell you, old girl, thought you are black. By God! not quite ace of spades, thanks be, but eight annas in the rupee," he went on, incoherently, with eyes fast closed. "They'll give me hell for it, but I'm doing the hon'ble stunt, and—damn th' conshequences!—you're pretty enough for any—(hic) —fellow to——"

("Janey"—? Judith was puzzled. Why did he call her "Janey" and talk of her being "black" and "eight annas in the rupee" which she had learned was a term for describing half-castes, since eight annas was the half of a rupee! But, people intoxicated were delirious—light-headed, and did not know what they were saying. He was evidently very much intoxicated, for his words had no bearing on anything at all!)

"Don't talk, Hubert," she said, soothingly, beginning to be terribly afraid, yet determined not to show it. She had no necessity to repeat her advice, for Hubert's head became a dead weight as he slipped into profound unconsciousness while his alcoholic breath fanned her cheek.

Disgusted and nauseated, Judith kept her face averted while the car sped to its destination through the congested native quarter towards the Reach, with its riverside palaces; and to the handsome mansion standing on its own grounds, which Gerard Bolton had purchased for his week-end gatherings; and which, from hints let drop in her hearing, were not too well spoken of in dignified circles.

Judith longed to arrive, for conditions in the car were growing unbearable. She was full of panic to think of what she had done—full of bitterness at the deception which had been practiced on her—afraid to look ahead; for she doubted her power to sustain the rôle of devoted wife to a man who was apparently given to drink. His own cousin had whispered the word—"dipsomaniac," which meant that he was helpless to resist the craving for drink when it was upon him with mad violence. All her life, she had been mortally afraid of meeting drunken men in the street or railway carriages and Tubes, and now she had married one who could never be anything but repulsive to her after this breakdown, and towards

whom she must always find it difficult and degrading to do her duty.

What should she do?

Larry had asked her to remember that *he would be there*. What did he mean? Reflecting earnestly on his words she came to the conclusion that he must have meant that he would not leave Calcutta, yet; and that she could be sure of his help should she need it.

Dear, beloved Larry! How mad she had been! Why did she, only now, realize her folly? If she had done as he had asked her to do—broken with Hubert and married him—how different her outlook on the future would have been! But the knot was tied "hard and fast," as Hubert had rambled incoherently, and could not be undone.

She had done what she had imagined at the time was the right thing, though she had been cruelly deceived concerning Hubert. It had seemed dishonorable to jilt him at the eleventh hour. Now, she wished with all her heart she had not been guided by such dutiful instincts, and had grasped at happiness before duty and honor!

Hubert's head cramped her shoulder; contact with his person gave her cold thrills of horror. Never had she dreamed it would be so!

"Oh, God," she prayed mentally, "save me from him!" To think of herself, alone, in a great house with him in his present state of intoxication—liable, when he recovered, to be obliged to submit

to his caresses, which now seemed hateful and degrading, plunged her into a state of nervous prostration bordering on hysteria. In imagination, it was not unlike being in the embrace of a gorilla, helpless and at its mercy, and in danger of her very life.

His kisses and caresses could never be anything but an insult after this! His very condition on their wedding day, was an insult. She knew it, now that she had time to face the position, and her humiliation was desperate. If the drive had continued a few minutes longer she would have lost all her admirable self control and shrieked aloud for help. Once or twice, she had been aware of a taxi close behind—but when she peeped through the window, other cars and carriages made it impossible for her to be sure that any one, in particular, was following the Kennedys' limousine, and she gave up thinking about it.

But when they arrived under the porch of the house at Garden Reach and she could not rouse Hubert from his death-like stupor to make him descend, while servants collected on the steps dismayed and without initiative how to act, Larry appeared in the doorway, his face, in the glare of the electric globe, looking set and stern.

"Oh, Larry!" she sobbed out in her relief, and broke down utterly.

Larry made no reply, but in an incredibly short time had heaved the unconscious bridegroom out

of the car and into the arms of the waiting servants.

"Put him to bed—put him where he will sleep, undisturbed, till morning. If necessary, lock him into his room," said he, brutally. "I dare say they are used to seeing him so—as they, also, see their master, Bolton, who is another drunken swine," he said to Judy as he drew her out and led her up the steps and into the hall.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, dear," he went on, guiding her still further to a small room on the ground floor, which was furnished as a smoking den. "I am here to see you through, and, in the morning, something will have to be done." He led her to a lounge, and leaving her for a moment, returned with a glass of iced water. "There's a woman here, a Eurasian maid,—engaged, she says, to attend on you,—who will get you all you want. Let her take you to your room. No one will disturb you for some time. When you have dined, try to rest and sleep, if possible; and, for safety, lock your door."

"Larry—you are an angel of mercy to have come! I don't know what I should have done without you!" Judy exclaimed, laying her cheek against his shoulder. In that tragic moment, it seemed that they were old, old friends and he, a tower of strength. Her gratitude was unspeakable. What, indeed, would she have done without him!

"You poor little girl. God! You have made a mess of things, Judy!" was all he said of reproach

for his shattered happiness and the present horror. But he stooped and put his lips to her hand.

"Where is the woman?" Judy asked, closing her eyes to hide her utter defeat.

Larry went to the door and called to a servant. Presently he returned with the woman, and Judy was surprised to see how pretty she was in her dark way, and how very young. She could scarcely have been much older than herself.

"Are you to be my maid?" Judy asked her, pathetically.

"Till an ayah can be engaged," said the Eurasian. "The house bearer was looking for an ayah for you, and I"—she hesitated, looking slightly confused —"I knew him—have known him—so—I said I would come for a few days till one is found, Madam."

"I am so glad, for I do not know the language. Mr. Kennedy is unfortunately——"

"Yes, Madam. Those who know him intimately, are not surprised."

"I did not know him—intimately. But, perhaps—it will never happen again?"

"Let me show Madam her room," said the Eurasian girl preferring not to discuss possibilities.

"Yes—show Mrs. Kennedy her room," said Larry. "Good-night Judy. Don't worry. If you lock your door you will be all right, and I shall call in the morning. Meantime, I am glad you have Miss Gomez to look after you." He spoke in tones

of relief, and followed Judith to the foot of the stairs.

Judy waved her hand to him from the bend, thankful to know that she would see him, again, in the morning. For the first time, she was able to notice the appearance of the house and was struck by its loftiness and grandeur. The hall and stairs were wide and built in marble, as, also, the landing above, and tall pillars, white and blue-veined, supported the roof. She had subconsciously noticed the same tall pillars under the porch; also in the pale dusk a gleam of the river and the scent of roses. Apparently, Gerard Bolton was a rich man.

The room to which she was led by the Eurasian girl, was large, and, in addition, luxuriously furnished, with large windows overlooking the flower-garden and river, she could judge, by the sound of oars splashing and the sight of twinkling lights reflected in the water. The same sweet scent of roses came up to her from below, and she could see the shadowy shape of a trellised summer-house and white walks winding among a mystery of flower-beds. But there was no pleasure for her in these things. Her interest in life was dead. She was married irrevocably to a drunkard, and Larry, whom she loved, could never be anything to her while Hubert lived. Her feeling was one of wild regret and hopeless despair. Something would have to be done—either Hubert would have to promise

never to touch a drop of "liquor" again, or she would leave him. She would do her duty if he showed that he wished, for her sake, to be a credit and not a disgrace to all who were connected with him.

When she turned from the window, she saw that the Eurasian girl had begun unstrapping her suitcase.

"Don't—at least, not now," cried Judy. "I—I may not stay."

"You will stay to-night?"

"Perhaps to-night—if I am safe."

"If you lock your door, you have nothing to fear—the gentleman said so."

"Yes—I shall lock my door—but I shall not go to bed. I couldn't, with any peace. What is your name?"

"Jane Gomez, Madam."

Jane—Jane—"Janey"?—"Janey" was surely a pet name for "Jane" which was unromantic and plain?)

"Are you ever called 'Janey'?" Judith asked, disingenuously.

"Not as a rule. My people always say 'Jane,' Madam. It is short enough."

Judy felt ashamed to probe further regarding the coincidence of names, but her thoughts harped on the fact that the girl was obviously a half-breed, and Hubert had said "black," and "eight annas in the rupee"! Moreover, Jane was pretty in her way,

with great, dusky, long-lashed eyes, and had certain sinuous movements which were rather captivating. How did she happen to know the bearer in this establishment unless she had been here before? Gerard Bolton and Hubert were pals, and in the car, Hubert had thought, while drifting into unconsciousness, that he was speaking to "Janey."

Judy's cheek burned with shame and disgust. Could it be possible that this Jane was on intimate terms with Hubert? or had been? It made her eye the girl coldly as she flitted about the room arranging things according to her idea of comfort, closing a shutter, opening another, drawing curtains, and generally justifying her presence there.

"Through that doorway you reach a verandah," said Jane, who seemed familiar with the disposition of the rooms. "You pass through the dressing-room first. A bathroom, also, leads off the dressing-room." She lifted a hanging pardar and showed, in the gloom, a smaller room beyond.

"It is a lovely house," said Judy, for something to say.

"Yes, Madam. Mr. Bolton is rich and gives grand week-end parties, with boating and tennis. He knows heaps of people——"

"What kind of people?" asked Judy, wondering who cared for a "drunken swine."

"Oh—they are mostly men," hesitated Jane. "They play cards all night——"

"And drink heavily? How do you know, Jane?"

"I—I have heard the servants talk," said Jane, coloring hotly. "Only once, I came to look after some ladies—they were actresses, and—and—that is how I know the parties are grand."

"Did they make a great noise?" Judith believed actresses were all rowdy and Bohemian.

"They were most of them drunk," said Jane.

"And Mr. Kennedy? I suppose this is where he has learned to drink?"

Jane's head drooped and she turned aside. "Mr. Kennedy has not been the better for Mr. Bolton's companionship," was all she said, and turned the subject. "There is a winding staircase in the verandah which leads to the rose garden. If you want to pick roses in the morning, that is your nearest way, Madam."

"I love roses, but I don't think I shall want to pick them while I am here. I may leave in the morning. What have they done with—with Mr. Kennedy?" Judith asked, unable to meet Jane's eye, so bitter was her shame.

"The servants are putting him to bed in Mr. Bolton's room. He will, probably, sleep all night if he has had enough—or he might get up in the night and want to drink more, only he will not find anything, for I heard the bearer say he would lock up the wines and whisky." Jane spoke listlessly, and Judy surprised a look of real unhappiness in her small dark face.

"Aren't you frightened of men who are under the influence of alcohol?" asked Judy, "for I am —desperately afraid."

"I used to be—but I have got over it."

"How do people get over the horror of it?"

"It is wonderful the things you will do—for love," said Jane, her voice almost inaudible.

"Would you live with a man if you found out that he drank and was often intoxicated?"

"Yes—I would. I would take care of him, for drunkards cannot take care of themselves."

Judy stared wide-eyed. "But—but—wouldn't you hate him?"

Jane stared at Judy. "How can you hate anyone you truly love?"

"Disgust kills love."

"*I* should not feel disgust, because, every time, I should know that it isn't the real person. It is a—a possession, so to speak."

Judy continued to stare. How well the little half-breed talked! She had evidently been well educated, or had mixed with people who had the habit of speaking well.

"You see," Jane continued, "Dipso—*mania*. That is what is wrong. It is madness in the form of a craving for drink. And when it possesses the patient"—Judy noted the word—"it is beyond his power to resist. If he could, he would save himself."

"I have always thought that men drank from self-indulgence."

"They do, Madam, when they are not dipsomaniacs. Dipsomaniacs generally inherit the craving."

"I wonder if—Hubert inherited his?" Judy ruminated aloud.

"His grandfather and two uncles died of drink," said Jane.

Judy was startled. How could Jane Gomez know so much?

Seeing her questioning look, the Eurasian continued, her eyes lowered respectfully. "It is common knowledge among the natives, for Mr. Kennedy's people have lived in Calcutta for two generations. They founded the jute business which is now prosperous under—the present owner," she substituted for "your husband's father." "The old man died in an asylum for inebriates, and his other two sons who followed him were a great drag to the business till they died—one in an accident, ten years ago, and the other in the War. The War was the salvation of Basil, the youngest, who was killed at Mespot."

Silence fell between them for a space while Judy wondered if there would be any hope of saving Hubert! a forlorn hope at the best—and, without love to support her, a crucifixion of her spirit, if she undertook the experiment.

"Shall I bring up your dinner on a tray?" Jane asked Judith.

"Oh, no, thank you! I could not eat," was the reply in choked accents.

"Dinner is laid in the dining-room, downstairs, for you and—Mr. Kennedy." Judith noticed the hesitation. It seemed always an effort for Jane to mention Hubert.

"I want nothing. Go, Jane, and dine, yourself. I shall try to rest as I am."

"Then, good-night, Madam. Be sure to lock or bolt your door, that is, if you are afraid."

II

Judith, much too unnerved to compose herself to rest after bolting the doors that led into her bedroom, sat, instead, by the open window and looked down upon the peaceful river flowing at the foot of the garden. She welcomed the soft evening breeze, and tried to find distraction for her mind in the moving lights reflected in the water, and in the many sounds that came up to her from without. Everything was strange, and made her shiver with loneliness and dread. This marriage which she had thought would give her protection and happiness, had turned out a nightmare of disappointment and misery, and there were long years ahead of her in which life would be all self-denial and humiliation. This was what she had

done for herself, when she might have been happy with Larry who was admirable in every sense, and had wanted to marry her!

How could she bear it? How endure to spend her life watching for, and fighting, the devils of drink that threatened to ruin a human soul?

Presently, Judith withdrew from the window. The sight of the gleaming water reminded her too poignantly of the voyage out, and Larry, for whom her heart yearned. To-night she might have been with Larry—in the heaven of his arms!

Sundry noises about the house told her by inference that servants were shutting up the doors and windows preparatory to retiring for the night, and she wondered if Hubert still slept steadily. From wondering, she unbolted her door which led into the drawing-room—a handsome, well-furnished room on the first floor situated above the dining-room, and into which several bedroom suites opened—and called the familiar "*Koi-hai*" of India: ("Is anyone there?").

A dark, bearded face looked in at the door on the landing and was immediately withdrawn.

"Who are you?" asked Judith.

After a moment, the face again appeared and looked impatiently at her. "What does Memsahib wanting?" came in bad English from behind the beard.

"Where is the Sahib? Is he sleeping?"

"He not wake. All to-night he *bakose*,* Miss Baba telling us to go, it is late, and all must sleep. Memsahib also sleep."

"Where is the Miss Baba?"

"Sitting to watch by bed of Sahib."

Judith withdrew herself from the doorway and once more bolted her door. So Jane was nursing the inebriated bridegroom! "Janey"—? She began to believe that there had been some sense in Hubert's ramblings in the car, only, he had mistaken her for the girl, and believed they were married!

So she had another sin to lay at Hubert's door, and one that was more unpardonable!

What was there between them, to have so influenced the girl's attitude towards men who were hereditary dipsomaniacs, as to make her pitiful and tolerant?

Judith stared before her in the darkness as she reviewed, in mind, all Jane had said, and she tried to read between the lines.

But what did it matter! she asked herself, since there could never be any love or sympathy between herself and the drunkard she had married. Should he ever presume to make love to her again after this dreadful night, she would leave him to his fate.

He would have to learn that the cruel trick by which he and his people had trapped her, had des-

* Unconscious.

troyed, for ever, all possibility of her caring for him again, even as a friend.

Time passed. The darkness deepened without; a church clock, somewhere in the distance, struck twelve. Nature began to demand rest, so Judith threw herself on the bed, just as she was, and dozed fitfully.

Later—it must have been towards dawn, for the air was sweet with dew and garden scents while a pale light was slowly creeping over the heavens —she awoke with a start. Something had happened! All in a minute she sat erect and listened to angry voices in the house: a man's voice was raised blusteringly.

Could it be Hubert's?

It was Hubert's, without doubt, and so loudly was he declaiming, that she could even hear his words—

"Damned scoundrel—make him unlock the cellarette, or I'll give him hell! I *shall* have whisky, do you hear?"

Was he shouting so brutally at poor little Jane? Judith's heart stood still with alarm. He had come to his senses and was demanding liquor! God forbid that they should let him touch it!

A soft voice murmured in reply, at which there was a bellow from the dipsomaniac as he brought his fist down on something with a crash causing the sound of falling china and glass, while the crash of a table overturned vibrated throughout the house.

Judy shivered where she crouched and looked anxiously towards the door.

There was a sound of running footsteps. Then, shouting to someone at a distance—

"Tell him to be quick about it. I won't be kept waiting—never mind the soda, I'll take it neat."

After that, things were quiet for some time. Judy heard the unmistakable sound of soda-water being released from a bottle, and, then, silence. The light gradually increased without, stealing into the room through the open windows and chasing away the black shadows of the night.

When she had just begun to hope that he had fallen asleep again, heavy, lurching footsteps resounded about the house. Doors were opened and shut noisily, objects were rudely flung aside, there was a stumble, a curse near at hand, and, finally, rapping on the panels of her door.

"Judith!" his voice called thickly, and Judy thought she would have died, so horrible was her fear. "What's up?—Let me in."

When she made no answer, hoping that he would take the hint and go away, he knocked louder and imperiously.

"What the devil?—good Lord! am I not your husband? What are you playing at? I couldn't before, I was beastly queer—rotten mishtake mixing drinks——" Excuses failing him, he repeated his knocks, "Look here," said he, drunkenly, "I'm not going to be done out of my jush rights. If

you think I'm drunk, I'm not—only a little bit 'on'—hic! Most fellows are, when they're married. Open—! don't be shtupid, m'dear. This is our—hic—! honey-moon, ishn't it?" and a succession of impatient knocks followed, each more determined than the last.

Judith cowered on the edge of her bed trying to think what she should do. Suppose he broke down the door?

The thought nearly made her shriek, and she rose to her feet, ready to run at the first sign that such was his intention.

"Judith—! damnation!" he thundered, losing his self-control since he was not master of himself. "Do you hear me? If you don't say something, I'll break down the door."

Judy immediately tried parleying. She spoke through the crack—

"Hubert—go away. I want to be alone. I will see you in the morning when—when you are—yourself."

"I am drunk, then?—is that your notion?" Oaths followed, and the door shook under a blow from his fist. A soft voice then pleaded with him to desist. Judith thought it might be a woman's—Jane's, possibly. Then came the sound of a blow and fall accompanied by a faint scream. The next moment, there was a lunge at the door—the bolt yielded, and Hubert fell into the room almost upon her, and measured his length on the floor.

Judith did not wait to see him pick himself up, but unlocked the dressing-room door and ran, through it, to the verandah beyond, that she might gain the garden by means of the stair Jane had mentioned, as belonging to the private verandah of the suite.

She found it without difficulty, and was soon in the garden, while day dawned in the Eastern heavens. Dressed in her "going-away" frock, hatless and panic-stricken, she plunged through flowerbeds tearing her clothes and scratching her hands on the thorns of the rose bushes, till she reached a path and was caught in a pair of strong arms.

For a mad moment she thought Hubert had outflanked her and was making her his prisoner, till she realized how wild an idea it was, since Hubert was incapable of any such design, mentally and physically, while under the influence of drink. He had been barely able to stand, much less to walk! It was Larry—! dear, faithful Larry! and she clung sobbingly to his breast.

"Take me away—oh, for the love of God, hide me from him!"

"I have come for that purpose. Don't be afraid, now that you are with me." Without another word, he carried her to the gate where the *durwan*,* in charge, was at his post to let her through. It seemed that the servants were all sympathetic,

* Gatekeeper

knowing Hubert's state and having the greatest contempt for such a sahib.

Larry took Judy to a taxi waiting in the street some paces down the lane, and, lifting her within, followed after, and they were soon whirled away in the grey mists of early dawn.

The streets seemed all but deserted. Here and there, a conservancy wagon rattled along cumbrously; water-carts were filling up at hydrants by the wayside. Very few pedestrians were about.

"How did you know?" Judith asked Larry the moment she could think. "What brought you back?"

"I never went away."

"Have you been here all the time—in the garden?

"I was pacing the drive when I heard noises, and was in the act of locating them, when you found me."

"You are wonderful! I shall never to able to tell you how grateful I am!" She shivered in his arms and hid her face.

"You have hurt yourself, surely?" Larry asked in concern, noticing for the first time spots of blood on the front of her pretty dress.

"It was the thorns—I don't care," she answered impatiently. "Where are we going?"

"To my hotel—the Great Northern. You may not wish to credit it, but I booked a room for you by telephone after we said good night. Bolton's

'phone came in handy. I felt that you would leave Kennedy sooner or later, and, if we are together, we can plan where to go."

"Oh, Larry dear! Why don't you reproach me? Why don't you tell me that I have been a fool—? How terribly I have ruined my life!"

"And mine—! unless——"

She understood, and the need for protection being greater than her regard for her good name, she nestled to him in the car and was glad to think he wanted her and would take her away. Her brain seemed capable of only one idea, and that was, to put herself beyond the reach of the drunkard she had married. A conspiracy to cheat her of her happiness and liberty had secured her in marriage bonds, and she refused to regard such a union as one of God's making. How blindly she had walked into the Kennedy trap. Hubert, unknown to her, had deteriorated horribly since their parting in London, and his parents, realizing their own helplessness to save him, had sacrificed her in the hope that a wife could accomplish what they had failed to do. People who knew the Kennedys had remained silent, fearing the law of libel. No one had had mercy on her! Larry, alone, was her friend and true lover.

The taxi put them down at the hotel before any, but servants, were about, and Larry took her to the room he had engaged, telling her to sleep soundly, secure in his care and protection.

"When you are feeling more yourself, we can talk over immediate plans," said he, while parting from her at her door. "The first consideration is to restore your nerves and make you fit for whatever might be in store."

"Larry," she cried, pressing her cheeks to his in the deserted passage, "I cannot think—I scarcely know what I am doing—but I shall trust you—knowing you will never make me do what is wrong."

Larry kissed her with something like reverence. "My darling! What is wrong? and what is right? Was it right to have deceived and trapped you? Would it be wrong if you refused to be bound by a promise made under a misconception of the case? Leave all to me. I love you—but, of one thing be sure. I shall never take an unfair advantage of you. One day you will come to me of your own accord and say—'I love you so, Larry, that life apart from you is like death. Make me live!' "

CHAPTER III

THE DAY AFTER

IN the afternoon, when Judith felt able to rise, she found several parcels waiting for her in the dressing-room with a note from Larry. He had been shopping for her, and with the instinct some men possess for the right sort of clothes for women they love, he had been to a large store in the town and had chosen model gowns, guided by the knowledge that Judith was "stock size"; and he had spent some time in selecting hats to tone with each. Underwear, he had left to the lady behind the counter who had carte blanche in the matter of cost, aware that he would be satisfied with nothing less than the best. As he had always had special fancies in footwear, and had taken the precaution of carrying away a measure of Judith's shoe, which she had placed in a passage to be cleaned, she was amazed to find how faultless had been his choice. Nor had he forgotten gloves. Judith peeped into the cardboard boxes only to discover that her new trousseau was infinitely prettier than the first, and it appalled her to think of the fortune he must have spent on the goods. In addition to wearing apparel,

were trunks and a dressing-case, the sight of which struck her dumb as she raised the lid—Russian leather, and completely fitted with ivory and cut-glass. She collapsed on a seat and nearly cried in her dismay at his extravagance. She had suspected he was wealthy—but to be able to spend so much on her in one morning, made her feel awed and overcome.

Now that she had rested and her nerves were in better form, she knew that it would never do to elope with Larry trusting to Hubert to divorce her. The bare idea was repugnant to her moral sense, for she had been bred in a conventional atmosphere and could not imagine herself happy as an outcast from her people and friends. Did Larry think she would ultimately give herself to him and risk being freed by Hubert? If so, she would have to explain gratefully, that it could never be. The law had made her a wife till death should free her—or misconduct on the part of Hubert make it possible for the marriage to be revoked—nothing else would be of any use. Much as she loved Larry—much as he loved her—she would have yet to say good-bye, and work to earn her living. As for all these things—he would have to send most of them back, and allow her to regard the remainder as a loan. Some day she might have the luck to return the money they had cost.

But how dear he was! How generous and thoughtful! If anything, she loved him all the

more for his mad thought for her comfort!

Where was Hubert, she wondered? Had he tried to find her? She hoped he would not be rough with poor little "Janey" who, she guessed, loved him in spite of his degraded state, or she would not have been there to watch over him in his helplessness.

If the disappearance of his bride put a check on Hubert's craving for alcohol, would he go immediately to his people and institute a search for her? And would they look for her at the hotel? sure that she could be nowhere else than under Larry's protection? for he had so plainly shown his sympathy by taking her away.

She trembled from head to foot at the thought of Hubert arriving at the hotel and demanding her return. Possibly, he would be accompanied by his father. She was not so ignorant as not to know that they could not force her to return. All the same, the dread of seeing Hubert again made her weak and faint.

When she was ready, she left her room to look for Larry, and, to her horror, saw him from the top of the stairs in earnest conversation with Mr. Kennedy in the lounge. The latter looked greatly upset and was speaking and acting nervously, and, Judy fancied, he continually brushed away tears from his eyes. As for Larry—his face looked white and stern.

So he had run her to earth! Judy's fear rendered

her incapable of a calm analysis of the situation, and sent her flying, in a panic, to her room to hide behind locked doors till Larry should ask her to open them. She wanted to run away from all possibility of being found, for the law was on Hubert's side, and she believed she would, in the end, allow herself to be persuaded to undertake his reformation. She was his wife and it was a moral duty, some would think. She could only hope that Larry would take her back to England, for she was a pauper without a penny of her own in the world! But for Larry, she was a stranger in the city without the vaguest idea of how to look after herself. What would she have done without him—God bless him!

II

In the meantime, Larry conversed with Mr. Kennedy in undertones, deaf to the noise of the traffic outside; all his seething anger and resentment, for the moment, forgotten.

"Murdered!" Mr. Kennedy was saying. "Stabbed in the back—my God!—and she's gone. All the servants, too, have gone."

"Murdered?" Larry repeated through stiff lips, stunned by the news. Subconsciously, he was seeing, again, the blood stains on the front of Judith's gown, her panic, her terror! Shaking himself free of the ghastly doubt which was laying

hold of his mind, he tried to follow the gist of what Mr. Kennedy was telling him. Yet, through all he heard, was Judy's voice saying impatiently: "It was thorns!" just as though she could not endure to be asked questions.

"I will tell you all from the beginning," said Mr. Kennedy trying to be more coherent, but speaking rapidly. "Having persistent misgivings concerning Hubert, and a great pity for Judith, seeing how our hopes of his cure were shattered, I drove over to Garden Reach, after luncheon, to see how they were getting along. To tell the truth, I wanted to have a talk with Judith—to tell her how sorry I was that I had allowed the fact of Hubert's failing to be suppressed. My only excuse was my hope that his youth and her affection would work together for his salvation. However, when I got there, not a soul was to be seen. At first, I imagined that Hubert had given all the servants leave for the afternoon. The gate was ajar—the door on the porch was open, so I went right in." Mr. Kennedy wiped the beads of perspiration from his brow. "The house was as silent as the grave. I did not know what to think of it, so went from room to room, more and more puzzled, not knowing what to make of the fact that the table was laid as for dinner—nothing disarranged. I supposed they were both upstairs; yet the dead stillness of the house gave me a gruesome feeling of presentiment. I hurried upstairs to the drawing-room

with its suites of bedrooms on either side. As I passed through one lot, it seemed to me that Bolton's bedroom had been slept in. I called Hubert's name aloud. There was no answer. A sickly smell greeted my nostrils. Oh, God! shall I ever forget it!" he cried. "It will haunt me to the grave.

"Across the hall, a door was wide open, the *pardar*, torn from most of its rings, was hanging at one side, and there, prone on the floor, was Hubert, motionless, on his face, with—Oh, my God! That I should have been the first to discover it—a knife buried in his back." Mr. Kennedy was shaking in every limb. "A foul murder, sir! I don't like to say what I think, but it looks plain enough. Someone has killed my boy, and his mother has yet to hear of it."

"What have you done since the discovery?" Larry asked through white lips.

"I telephoned to the nearest police station and put the matter at once in their hands. It then occurred to me to ask you if you know anything of Judy's whereabouts? I gathered that you had travelled out together on the same ship. She mentioned it herself to my wife at the reception, so, pardon me, I wondered if you could throw any light on her disappearance? She has no friends in this city."

By that time, curious eyes and ears were concentrating on the two men engaged in agitated con-

versation, and people stopped talking to listen.

"I couldn't tell you," said Larry, feeling the need of all his faculties to meet the dangerous situation. Hubert Kennedy murdered—his wife missing—the entire staff of servants bolted to avoid cross-examination by the police! It did not require a very intelligent mind to guess that the suspicions of the police would immediately fall on Judy who, alone, would be thought likely to have killed her husband to escape his drunken attentions on that first night of their honeymoon. If it was her hand that had struck the blow, it might have been better for her to have stayed and braved it on a plea of self-defense—no other idea was conceivable—and she would, surely, stand a good chance of being acquitted. But she had fled, saying nothing to him—her best and only friend—accepted his protection, offered blindly; and now they were both in for trouble of a very grave sort.

"If you cannot help me, I had better go, for we have to find the servants—they will assuredly be able to throw light on what has happened." Thus, Mr. Kennedy, looking disappointed.

Larry saw him to the door, mechanically, expressing his sympathy for the sudden and terrible nature of the tragedy, and, when he was gone, turned aside to stare into the street while trying, rapidly, to form some plan by which he could, yet, save Judy from arrest and all that must inevitably follow. In assisting her to escape, he knew he

would be endangering his own safety—in fact, make an accomplice of himself to share all the suspicion which now centered on her; but that did not trouble him. If they took her, they might just as well take him, too. Good God! he kept repeating. Poor child! Somehow he had no doubt that Judy had done it in sheer fright and self-defense. The knife had probably been brought to her with her dinner, and finding it at hand, she had armed herself. God help her!

But why had she not told him?

III

Larry knew there was no time to lose if he meant to take Judy away before the police ferreted out the fact that it was he who had run off with her from Garden Reach. But, for the moment, it was difficult to form a wise and definite plan. It was the easiest thing in the world for a couple to be traced even in so vast a country as India, for they were white people and would scarcely hope to escape notice so completely as Indians might, under the same circumstances. Where could he take her without the police being on his track, in no time, like a pack of hounds. If they could only get out of India by some boat sailing immediately! But, that was impossible owing to passport formalities.

He had a married sister in some lonely spot on the Ganges called "Jamunghur"! She was hoping

he would be able to visit her before leaving India, and her invitation seemed opportune.

Larry thought very hard of the chances in that direction. Josephine and her husband, who was an indigo planter, lived on their own factory about twenty miles from the nearest civil station—but laughed at distances and bad roads, for their Ford which was the subject of many a local jest, did them good service when they needed diversion and the company of friends.

While he was contemplating the possibilities of an immediate visit to Jamunghur Factory without leaving a trace of their destination behind—for railway tickets tell tales—a strange coincidence happened.

Close by, strangers were conversing—a lady and gentleman—and, when Larry heard the gist of their conversation, which was contained in a single sentence, he was inclined to believe that it was a direct intervention of the Almighty on Judy's behalf.

"*It is quite a new car we want to sell.*" (Larry listened keenly.)

"You should get a good price," said the gentleman.

"I hope so. You see, the unfortunate part of it is that it is too high-powered, and, on account of the tax, people are buying small cars."

"It is a pity you have to sell."

"It is, indeed. But my husband is going abroad

at once for his health and we may not return. We start to-morrow to meet our boat at Bombay, and I so fear it will be sacrificed when put to auction."

Larry did not wait to hear more. "Pardon me," said he to the lady. "You are selling a large car, I believe?"

"Yes—that is, we are trying to," said she.

"I am so glad I happened to overhear your conversation, for I am touring, and on the lookout for a car that will be useful for long distances."

Immediately, the lady leant forward and a business deal was transacted ending with telephonic communication with Larry's bankers. The transfer of the car was made, by check, to Larry, who was warned that the sale would have to be registered.

But he was risking no delays. A telephone message to the garage, ordered for the car to be sent up at once, and Larry ran to Judith with the news.

"Judy!" he called at her door in suppressed excitement, "may I come in?"

Judy assented faintly, and Larry, pushing aside the heavy curtain entered the room to find her trembling with nervous apprehension. "Oh, Larry —I saw him talking to you! He has found me out! They'll want to take me away!" she cried clinging to his hands, her eyes wide with distress.

"Darling, be brave!" said Larry seeing nothing but what was natural in her fear. She was facing a ghastly situation, enough to make a strong man

quail, and his heart melted with sympathy for her. How hard the world was on timid, delicate creatures who had been forced by misfortune into breaking the law! "Pull yourself together," he said gently, "for I am here to shed my last drop of blood in your defence. No one shall take you away." He had completely mistaken the circumstances.

"Oh, Larry!—how good you are! I do not deserve it, but were it not for you I know I should die! I could not go on with it! I could not face it!"

"You shall not face it, so help me, God!" There was manly resolution and self-sacrifice in his face, deep determination, and undying love. He then explained his plan to her. He had bought a car which would be at the door in a few minutes with petrol for a long journey. It was capable of carrying plenty of luggage, so they would have to pack their things at once and start within the hour. As people were coming and going all day, their departure could excite no comment. The room he had booked the day before was for a "lady friend," and a romance would probably be suspected when they left together. None but the hotel clerk and manager would be interested. As no one as yet connected either himself or Judy with the tragedy which the newsboys were already shouting in the streets, no one was likely to interfere.

Judy, however, was too bewildered even to ask

what they were proclaiming, for there was no resemblance in the unfamiliar accent of the newsboys to the words, "Tragedy at Garden Reach residence", which Larry distinguished because he was already aware of facts.

Larry gave Judy all his help—there was no question of leaving her parcels behind or returning any of the purchases to the shops. They put everything into the trunk, and when the car arrived, the luggage was carried down and placed with his own belongings on the roof. There was no time to be lost. Every moment he feared he would see the Inspector of Police arrive with red-turbanned constables and demand to see "Mr. Larrimore Straughan." "But, fortunately for Judy," thought he, "all the servants had fled and it would take some time to discover their whereabouts before the police could connect her disappearance from Garden Reach with Larrimore Straughan at the "Great Northern Hotel."

With the greatest relief, he took his place at the wheel after making Judy comfortable in the tonneau, and started, unhindered, to find his way by a road map to the Grand Trunk Road.

IV

Larry had heard of the Grand Trunk Road—that wonderful highway that lay like a white ribbon on the green surface of Bengal and continued for

hundreds of miles, through the provinces, to the extreme north-west—a great highway through the length of India, but which he would abandon in due course in order to reach Jamunghur on a remote point of the Ganges.

Later, they dined from the luncheon basket he had fitted up with food for their sustenance during the journey; for he had no wish to leave any trace of their route at wayside hotels and travelers' inns. He parked the car under a group of mango trees and they picnicked together on the grass in moonlight, as many tourists were in the habit of doing.

"Where are we going?" she asked him for the first time, and Larry, who had been thinking hard, made his explanation.

"I shall have to pass you off as my wife, darling, for we are going to my sister's factory on the Ganges. She will be delighted to welcome you, but there will be misunderstandings and difficulties unless I let her think we are married—it will only be a little premature, dearest, for we shall be married as soon as things calm down a bit."

Judy sighed. For them to be married, there would first have to be a divorce—or annulment—which was understood. She supposed, the mere fact of their having gone away together would be enough for Hubert to obtain either. She hoped with all her heart that he would institute proceedings without loss of time. Meanwhile, she could trust Larry blindly. He had promised that he

would care for her—protect her—oh, was there anyone in the world like Larry! Therefore, she yielded every point. He knew best.

"I am thinking, it will be wisdom to take another name. It will not do for me to be identified with 'Larrimore Straughan' for whom they will presently be looking; for it is sure to leak out that I took you away. I shall have to make up a yarn to my sister. She'll believe anything I say, poor dear, as she believes me to be the soul of honor and truth."

"But it is dreadful that you should have to deceive anyone for my sake, least of all your sister who trusts you!" said Judy, regretfully.

" 'Needs must,' you know, 'when the devil drives'. This will be quite a plausible yarn, for I came in, lately, for my godfather's fortune, and it is easy enough to say that one of the conditions was that I should take his name. Fortunately it has the same initial—Sherman. 'Mr. and Mrs. Sherman'—will you remember? No one will dream of connecting 'Larry Sherman' with 'Larrimore Straughan'—or 'Judy Sherman' with 'Judith Kennedy'—*née* 'Lovel.' I think we shall be pretty safe from discovery for the present. If there are signs of trouble, we will have to think of some other plan, and move on."

Judy wondered how soon Hubert would give up the search, or if he would be sensible enough to free her at once. She believed he would be gen-

erous enough to do it, and prayed it would not be long before she could once again feel happy and safe.

Larry was not surprised at the dark lines under her eyes, the haunted look she wore, and it became his mission to cheer and relieve her depression.

"I shouldn't think about—all that," he said, tenderly. "It was not your fault. In self-defense it was even justifiable."

"That is how I felt," she answered with a catch in her breath. It was "self-defense" to run away from Hubert's hateful presence—to save herself from scenes that could only have been bitterly degrading.

"So cheer up. If the worst comes to the worst, I mean to save you at all costs . . . at all costs!"

This set her thinking of her moral obligation as Hubert's wife. Supposing that her going back to him was his one and only chance of keeping straight, had she any right to desert her post and break the solemn vows she had made? His reformation was of the first importance.

But that seemed impossible! If he had been unable to refrain from drink on his wedding night, nothing in the world would keep him straight. That being so, nothing in the world would induce her to return to Hubert!

They returned to the car when sufficiently rested, and proceeded on their way swiftly, unerringly; Judy trying to sleep in the tonneau, while

Larry drove steadily, his mind working all the time on plans—plans for her rescue and safety. It was a forlorn hope that they would succeed in eluding capture. The police were very efficient everywhere under the British Government, and it was within the bounds of possibility that they would yet be traced. It was only putting off the evil day. But Judy should have her chance of escape, even if he must pay dearly for helping to hide her away.

It was not a happy prospect—nevertheless Larry looked somewhat cheered.

At one of the railway stations on the road Larry refilled his petrol tank and again sped away through the darkness, the great headlights making the road brilliant for many yards ahead. Judy was a patient traveller, and he was thankful she could lie quietly and smile so sweetly at him whenever he asked how she was doing, though sleep seemed impossible to her. Once, she was startled by the weird cry of a pack of jackals from a paddyfield below the road; and when it was growing dawn, insisted upon sitting in front beside him. After that, they travelled side by side. Larry had to stop several times to inquire at the native villages through which he passed, if he was on the right road; and he replenished the luncheon basket once at a refreshment room, when the morning was well advanced.

He was very tired by the time they arrived in sight of the little civil station Josephine Lester had

often described in letters to her beloved brother. It was like "land in sight" after weeks at sea! for only twenty miles of road lay between it and Jamunghur.

Panighat was a pretty little station with scattered bungalows and court-houses; a club, with its attendant racecourse and tennis courts, and an unwieldy bazaar attached—all in a radius of three miles, the bazaar the most picturesque of all with its date palms, and tanks, and praying places.

"We now feel that we have all but arrived," said Larry, comfortingly. "We'll have a decent lunch, a hot tub, and sleep round the clock. You'll like that, won't you?"

"You need rest and refreshment more than I," said she, noting his look of fatigue and nervous strain.

"I do feel a bit played out," he admitted, for he had suffered moments of acute anxiety whenever the sight of a policeman in a station or village reminded him that he and Judy were liable to arrest at any moment. If their flight together had been discovered, what was to prevent telephonic communication to all parts of the country, advising police stations to be on the alert for just such a couple as themselves? and the wilder the district, the greater the likelihood of the police being warned to be on the look out.

After leaving the civil of Panighat behind, the rest of the way was wild and undulating, the road,

uneven and dusty. Cane brake and undergrowth lay on either hand, and hollows where rain had collected and become green and stagnant. Where there were fields under cultivation, villages were to be seen with huts massed together in picturesque confusion, with the ubiquitous date palm fringing the outskirts. Native humanity, scantily clothed, worked on the land, drove cattle, and otherwise justified their existence under the rays of a cloudless sun; while naked children rose out of the dust to stare round-eyed at the car as it passed.

V

At length, the outlines of the indigo factory were visible, the Lesters' bungalow in a garden within a green hedge, and the broad surface of the muddy Ganges looking golden in the sunlight.

As Judith caught sight of Josephine's face in the verandah she was seized with renewed compunction at the deceit she and Larry were about to practice on her.

"Oh Larry, let us tell her the truth!" she cried—almost too late, for the brakes were applied and they drew up before the steps.

"Impossible!" was his whispered reply, and she wondered why he was so unnecessarily determined to hide facts from his sister when, surely, she would have sympathized? But Larry knew best, thought she, too tired to reason. With mutual consent they

had avoided mention of Hubert's name ever since leaving Calcutta, and she shrank from bringing it up in argument.

"It is Larry!" cried Josephine, ecstatic with delight. "Oh, come in, come in! I am ever so glad to welcome you!"

Larry kissed her heartily and drew Judith forward—"My wife," said he, unfalteringly. He was not one to do anything by halves, so he lied bravely, looking Josephine full in the face.

"Hullo! When did you do it?" laughed his sister as she kissed Judy warmly. "Fancy springing such a surprise on us!"

"We met on the boat and travelled out together," said he.

——"and married on arrival? My word! It is quick work! I wonder what John will say when he hears." They exchanged a few more remarks and noncommittal explanations, and then Larry and Judy were hustled in to be refreshed, and to prepare for lunch. "You must both be fearfully tired! Have drinks before your tubs," and she signalled to a servant who vanished through a door.

Drinks were brought in, presently, on a tray—whisky and iced soda-water, and a glass of wine for Judy.

Josephine was short, stout, and merry, with one of those happy dispositions that are a real asset in out-of-the-way districts where company is

scarce and climate drawbacks are many. She was Irish and dark-haired like Larry; with the same blue eyes that twinkled, and creases of laughter at the corners, but had not his height nor his fine features.

"Lucky for you," said she gaily, "that we have no other guests just now, or we should have had to separate you to make room. Now you can have the best suite all to your dear selves, which you will appreciate if you are intending to spend your honeymoon with us."

CHAPTER IV

MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS

JOSEPHINE'S speech was a shock to Judy who had scarcely given a thought to accommodation. It now horrified her to think that she was expected to share the same rooms with Larry.

Larry saw the blush and pathetic appeal in her eyes, and smiled reassuringly. To Josephine he said coolly: "That's fearfully kind of you, old girl, and ripping for us. But don't forget to put a bed into the dressing-room for me. I snore, and if ever Judy were to hear me, it would be the end of romance for us."

Josephine went into peals of laughter. "Wise man! If more men had your forethought, there would be fewer divorces. You shall certainly have your way. I must tell John!" She then explained that John was at work at the factory.

"I am afraid," said Larry to Judy when Josephine left the room to give the necessary orders, "I am compromising you badly, sweetheart. But it will all come right when we are really married."

"Don't build on that," she answered sadly.

"I do build on it," he said emphatically. "It is all I live for."

When Josephine returned, Judy was carried off to rest as she looked over-tired, and Larry's solicitude for her had to be indulged. She was put to bed by Josephine in a capacious room and luncheon served to her on a tray. An ayah carried it in and offered to attend to her luggage; and while she unpacked the trunk and disposed of its contents in wardrobe and drawers, Larry spent a restful afternoon with his sister and brother-in-law, whom he informed of his changed surname. "*Sherman*, it is now, so remember the fact when you introduce me to your friends. *Straughan* is altogether a dead letter."

"I think it a shame. But, of course, if it was a condition in the will, you had no choice," said John, and Josephine agreed that it could not be helped. "Judy is sweet, Larry. I am in love with her," John remarked for the pleasure of making Jo indignant.

"She wouldn't look at you, John," retorted Jo. "Next to Larry, you haven't an earthly. Look at your *darzi** -made suits! I am lost in admiration of Larry's clothes, and as for Judy's—they are a dream!"

"She is not at all strong," said Larry, seizing the opportunity of gaining sympathy for his beloved. "That is why I propose staying here for a bit. She

* Bazaar tailor.

has had—a—some trouble, and needs a complete rest-cure for her nerves. No letters—no newspapers. These daily papers have so many tragedies appearing in their columns that it is enough to give sensitive natures like hers nervous prostration to open them."

"I think you are wise," said John. "The newspapers are all out for sensation, and it does no one any good to read of cases, for instance, like, Kennedy's—poor devil!"

"What was that?" asked Larry, lighting his cigarette with shaky fingers.

"Why, didn't you read the paragraph about it in this morning's paper?"

"How could he, dear, when he has been travelling all the time."

"I forgot! It seems Kennedy was married to a girl who came out to him from home: they arranged to spend the honeymoon at a house in Garden Reach, but the following day he was found murdered in her bedroom and the house absolutely deserted."

"Good God!" ejaculated Larry trying to make his tone sincere.

"The father found his own son, at noon, yesterday," said Josephine. "How gruesome for him! But the queer part of it is, that, not one of the servants can be found."

"They are shocking cowards," said John. "They must have all cleared out the moment they dis-

covered his body in the morning, each afraid that the police would fix it on him. The bride is missing, but there is a hint that they are on the scent and will have her in a day or two. Now, that's a mysterious business if you like. Marries him, and then sticks a knife into him!"

"Why on earth did they marry?"

Larry longed to tell them of Hubert Kennedy's drunkenness, but dared not show any knowledge of the characters in the tragedy.

"So you believe she did it?" said he, carelessly.

"Who else could have done it?—otherwise, would she have lost her head and bolted? She would have been the one to call up the police. She killed him, right enough! Some women are so wanting in self-control! Most likely they had a squabble and he was a bit of a brute."

"It couldn't have been a love-match," said Josephine.

"A story like that would be very upsetting to Judy," said Larry. "Don't let us refer to it in her presence." How providential, thought he, that his own name had not appeared!

II

Meanwhile, Judy suffered pangs of dismay at the situation Larry had brought about. She hated the deception to which she was committed, and was ashamed to so ill-requite such hospitable and trusting people.

How had Larry brought himself to do it? She would far rather have told the truth, which was a very simple affair—merely, that she had run away from her drunken bridegroom on the first night of their honeymoon, and that Larry was taking care of her. Such wonderful care, too, till Hubert made it possible for them to marry. Larry, of course, was jealous of her good name, and was trying to save her from the suspicion that she was his mistress. The color flooded her face at the bare idea of being any man's "mistress"! Her wedding ring bore out the lie, so that Josephine would not dream of doubting his assertion. Had he said, instead, "I have eloped with another man's wife," Josephine would have refused to take them in!—in which case, they would have been homeless, without a roof over their heads! So Larry was acting for the best, but oh! how miserable a thing it was to embark on a sea of lies! What storms, what shipwreck threatened!

In the sudden calm of the backwater into which she had drifted, she had time to analyze what she had done by throwing herself upon Larry's chivalry. It was madness, for who, in the world, would believe that she was innocent and virtuous?

Yet—she reasoned—if Hubert must annul the marriage, or divorce her, her elopement with Larry supplied the necessary grounds. It was freedom she wanted, whatever the cost!

Why did such things as gossip and scandal, and

the preservation of a good name, when it was a sex question, matter so little to men, and so much to women?

III

That night, after John and Josephine had retired, Larry and Judy lingered for some time in the dark verandah discussing the problems before them, and the lie to which they were bound.

The pale, sleepy landscape was full of the brooding mystery of an Eastern moon, where black shadows were impenetrable beneath objects bathed in silver light. A shimmering pathway of jewels danced on the moving surface of the river, and on all was the tranquillity of rest and silence.

"I want so much to go back home," Judy sighed; "to get away from misunderstandings and alarms; not to hear myself addressed by my married name as long as I live. Most of all, I want to forget the tragedy of my marriage. . . . To go to sleep tonight and wake up in the morning, finding that it has only been a bad dream!"

Larry was deeply touched. "You poor darling! Life has played a dirty trick on you!"

"And the worst of it is that I have been entirely to blame for not being honest towards Life. I see, now, that nothing should have made me *marry him* when I—when I——"

"Loved that hot-headed Irishman, Larry?" he

whispered. "Don't worry, sweet. You will forget it all when we are married. Just for the present, only, things are a bit mixed up. Jo will forgive the deception when we can make a clean breast of it, some day."

"Will she ever believe——?"

"She will only have to look into your eyes to be convinced that you are an angel of purity and goodness. I think, too, she will believe my word, however bad things may look. She will understand, for Jo is a real 'sport.' We have only to wait till the hue and cry settles down, and then find a way of slipping out of the country."

"I suppose there is a hue and cry for me?"

"Naturally," said he, afraid to tell her of the activities of the police lest she should be badly scared.

"They would like to make a prisoner of me for life—but I should die, Larry! I could not live the life!" she cried burying her face in his breast, her thought full of horror of existence mated to a dipsomaniac. It would be imprisonment indeed!

Larry, reading another meaning into her words, strained her to him. Whichever way he looked at the position, he could only see ultimate disaster. He was resolved, however, that she should be saved —whatever might happen to him. What a flood of misfortune had befallen them both from the moment of landing! When he recalled the idle, happy days at sea, a lump in the throat threatened

to choke him. Would he ever hear her laugh again in the care-free way that had made her laughter music to his ears?

"Let us try, while we are here, to be happy together," said he, desperately. "Let us try to forget that we are not man and wife. Love me, and let me love you!" He hid his eyes in her hair and waited for her answer which was long in coming, for she trembled from head to foot in his embrace. In response to her emotion, his heart throbbed wildly; he was deaf to the voices of the night wafted to them through the open archways of the verandah.

"Do you truly love me, Larry?" she whispered.

"I am proving how much I love you," said he. "Actions speak louder than words, my dearest. There is nothing in this world I would hesitate to do for you. I would even give my life for you."

"I believe it! I know it! For that, I thank God for you, Larry! There is no one on earth I love as I love you. Good night," she whispered, kissing him of her own accord with the trustfulness of a child. "I like to think that you are my protector—that you will never guide me wrong."

"Good night, my own beloved," he said, pressing his lips to hers. The weakness of the moment was conquered and he was strong again. "Shall I ever hear you laugh again as on the ship?"

"I wonder! I seem to have lived a lifetime since we landed!"

"There were one or two things I wanted to ask, but when I am with you I think of nothing but your sweetness and our love," said he, before he left her. "Oh—have you ever given the Kennedys your photograph?"

"I gave Hubert one—but I hated it, and the other day I tore it up, promising to sit again if he wished."

"Good," said he, thoughtfully, glad that her picture would not be appearing in the illustrated papers as the "Missing Bride." "Would you mind," he hesitated, "if I asked you to tell me all that happened that night—leaving out no little detail? It would help me a great deal to understand."

"I thought you understood?"

"I do—but I could *see* things better than through only my own imagination."

So Judy tremblingly related all that had occurred, just as the reader knows it, from the moment Larry left her at the foot of the stairs. "It is dreadful to go over all that in words," she shuddered as she came to the part when Hubert hammered on her door, cursing her drunkenly, and threatening to break it down.

"I know," he said sympathetically. "But it will be for the last time."

"I shall see it every night in my dreams"—she shuddered violently. "Don't ever let me think of it again, much less talk of it. That dreadful banging on the panels of the door—then its bursting in

and Hubert staggering through right against me and falling at my feet!"

(Was it then—the thought came to Larry—that she had stabbed Hubert in the back? He shuddered involuntarily as he pictured the helpless brute face downward on the floor, his back exposed to the mad impulse of her terror, her wild effort at self-defense!)

"And then?" said he in a voice that was hardly recognizable.

"And then?—I don't know—I can remember nothing but running through the rooms and down to the garden where—where, to my blessed relief, I found you!" Judy suddenly broke down and wept passionately.

"Don't," said he, holding her locked in his arms. "My poor, persecuted darling! See—you are safe with me! *Whatever happens*, Larry will save you from the consequences of that—tragedy."

"It was a tragedy!" she sobbed. "It was nothing but a tragedy to have been shut in with a madman —to have been forced to—to—" *run away in the dawn, a fugitive from a husband!* she was going to say when Larry placed his hand over her lips, then kissed them to still their trembling.

"Never mind!—it's done. We must never talk of it again," said he, soothingly. "There is one other matter—the gown. It was stained—you remember?"

"Yes—it was the thorns that scratched me——"

He wondered why she troubled to keep up the fiction of the thorns, but said nothing, only:

"Will you give it to me?"

"What will you do with it?"

"Destroy it."

It was a good idea, for it was a hateful reminder of that frightful night. "Will you? I am glad, for I should never wear it again, whatever happened. I should like to think it had ceased to exist."

Judith went to her room, and after searching in a drawer, found the gown and handed it out to him.

IV

Larry was engaged in his own room, an hour later, examining the objectionable gown which he intended to burn at the first opportunity, when a voice sounded inside his door:

"Hullo! What the dickens are you doing?"

It was John's, and John's face looking in.

Larry was ashamed of the start he gave—truly, his nerves were going to pieces! "I am only folding a frock Judy has a down on and has thrown away."

"Why not send it to the Kalimpong Homes? They are glad to have anything in that line," said John, coming in while Larry put it out of sight.

"They wouldn't want anything quite so smart," said Larry.

"I dare say not. Why don't you consult Jo? She might have a use for it."

"I will think of it. Anyhow, it's too late to-night."

"I came along to smoke a last cigar with you, if you were awake. Jo told me you are sleeping in here, so I looked in to make sure that you were not asleep. What about the verandah?"

The two men sat for some time in the verandah, in their pajamas, sipping "pegs" and talking "shop," which was indigo, its decline, and prospects till, finally, John confided to Larry that his visit to Jamunghur was opportune, as the "concern" was absolutely "broke."

"We are about 'stony,' dear lad, and I have a proposition to make. If it doesn't appeal to you, I'm going to sell up and clear out on what I get—Jo and I—and try my luck at sheep farming in Australia."

"I am awfully sorry to hear this, old man."

"Everything is in a deuce of a way—labor difficult since Gandhi was allowed a free hand too long, and prices rotten."

"Is it too far gone? It is a pity to sacrifice such a neat little 'going concern' in a hurry."

"That's my proposition—it need not be sacrificed if I can raise money on a mortgage—or, if you would buy me out and let me carry on as your manager, on a salary?"

"It's worth talking over, seriously," said Larry.

"We'll go into it in the morning, if you like, and work it all out." It was to his own and Judy's interest that John should hold on to Jamunghur and not sell it to a stranger. "What's made you so hard up?"

"I have been speculating in country produce, and the devil's been in it. I have lost steadily: what with the war and then famine, after which came floods and boycott! Gad! it's been enough to break one's heart!"

"I, on the contrary, have had extraordinary luck with my investments, so that I hope I shall be able to help you over the stile, quite handsomely."

John crushed his fingers in a hearty clasp and wished him the same good luck in his marriage.

Never had Larry felt meaner and more despicable in his life than when he drank John's whisky and could not confess the truth concerning himself and Judy. Had he made a clean breast of his position with regard to Judy, John would never have understood the reason of the lie, nor believed in their vaunted innocence, and there was too much involved for explanations at this stage of Judy's flight. So he puffed at his cigar and suffered torture. He had set himself a part that was not easy to play when he had always cherished high standards of conduct and prided himself on being an honorable man.

The situation was unique.

When John retired, Larry returned to his task of dealing with the incriminating gown, and carried it down to the river bank in the darkness and silence, to see it, presently, crumble into ashes.

CHAPTER V

FALSE COLORS

AT breakfast, for the next few days, Larry scanned the newspapers for a report of the inquest and was profoundly stirred when, at length, it appeared. He saw that Mr. Kennedy had been called, and that he had told much of what was already reported; but, in the minds of those who heard him and read the report, he left little doubt as to whose hand had done the deed.

"Tell the court all you know in this connection. Was your son a confirmed inebriate?" the coroner had asked, and Kennedy, assisted by questions and cross-questions, at great length had spoken—

His son had turned out a hopeless drunkard. He had broken the "pledge" more than once; he used to drink in secret and always exceeded at parties. In fact, parents and friends had been powerless to save him. That is why he, the father, had allowed the marriage to take place as a forlorn hope that a wife would accomplish what none else had been able to do. The young lady his son had married, was the daughter of the late Colonel Bryce Lovel, D.S.O., of Marne fame. No. She

had not been told of the deceased's failing. It was the idea that he would better preserve his self-respect if she were not told. They had been engaged for two years, and the infirmity had developed while they were parted. She came out to be married. It was a fairly large wedding. Yes. His son had exceeded badly, and was scarcely himself when he and the bride drove away on their honeymoon. Yes, he agreed that the deception was reprehensible. But his wife had faith in the influence of a good wife who loved her husband. He had every reason to believe Judith loved Hubert; but she was frightened and looked pale as she drove away. Yes, it was suggested that they should not leave while the deceased was in that drugged state, but as Hubert insisted and she made no appeal against the arrangement, it was allowed to stand.

It was perfectly true that the deceased had kept free of drink for close on a fortnight before the wedding—that it looked as though he were trying his best to abstain for the sake of the girl; but, the temptation proved too strong when others were drinking.

Mr. Kennedy had gone on to describe his visit to Garden Reach, and the state in which he found the place. The house was the property of Mr. Gerard Bolton of the Stock Exchange, and was used, generally, for bachelor parties over the week-end. There was no gambling done, as far as he knew, though bridge was played all night. Yes—some-

times ladies, also, were guests. Mr. Kennedy was afraid he could not name any, as they were not known in his set. He went on to describe the condition in which he had found the house, just as he had described it to Larry. His son was lying exactly as the police, subsequently, found him, cold and dead, with a knife still between his shoulder-blades. (Here Mr. Kennedy was reported to have broken down and was given considerable time to recover, after which he resumed his narrative emotionally.) The doctor told him that his son had been dead for hours—(Thereupon, he had been asked to confine himself to what he had seen and done, and to leave the doctor's evidence alone.)

"After you found your son dead, what did you do?" Thus the coroner, and Larry trembled lest he should see his own name in the report as having received a call from Mr. Kennedy. But the old man was bewildered, scarcely recalling what happened. He had telephoned the police immediately, and remained in the house till the Inspector arrived. He, then, went home and broke the news to his wife, who had been ill ever since. In fact, so ill, that the doctor had feared heart failure. Two nurses—(Larry breathed again).

Mr. Kennedy was asked to retire. His chauffeur was then called.

The chauffeur said he had driven the pair to the house at Garden Reach, and returned almost immediately. There had been several servants at the

entrance—he knew none of them by name or anything about them. The deceased sahib's own bearer was the only familiar face. He helped to carry his master from the car to a bed which a sahib—one who appeared suddenly out of a taxi—ordered to be made in another room from that which the lady was to occupy.

He did not remember seeing this sahib before—there were lots of sahibs at the wedding, and he had noticed none especially.

Asked to describe him, he was perplexed, and his description amounted to nothing that would distinguish this one from most other men in the town. He went into the house, and that was the last he saw of him.

Mr. Kennedy was called again and asked if he knew any gentleman who could have followed the Kennedys.

Mr. Kennedy, however, was unable to think of ony one of his friends who would so have interfered. It was hardly a thing anyone would have done, unless it was Mr. Straughan who had travelled out on the same boat with her, though most unlikely, for he had called on Mr. Straughan who was shocked to hear of the tragedy. It might have been some stranger who, seeing the party in trouble, volunteered, out of chivalry, to help Judith.

Larry drew a deep breath. He feared, however, old Mr. Kennedy would yet recall the fact of

Straughan's indignation and protests at the wedding, and tell the coroner about him. Second thoughts were the most dangerous, in a case of this kind.

"This young girl whom you sacrificed to your son," said the coroner—"was she excitable, temperamental, likely to have lost her head under trying circumstances?"

Mr. Kennedy believed she was highly nervous.

"Was she very fond of your son?"

Mr. Kennedy hesitated. "She seemed, in her letters, to have been fond of him; but there were no demonstrations from her of affection for the deceased whenever they were in the company of others.

"She was frightened, yet too proud to draw back, so went away with a man who was badly intoxicated? Was your son ever violent when under the influence of drink?"

"He was bad-tempered, as a rule, so we always left him to himself."

"Whenever crossed, or denied that which he had set his heart upon, used he to be violent?"

"On one or two occasions—yes. He once struck his mother."

"When you passed through the dining-room in that deserted house, did you see any cutlery about?"

"Yes, sir. The table was laid as for dinner."

Larry learned nothing more from the rest of the evidence, as none of the servants had been found,

so his eye swept the coroner's address to the jury. It seemed that it was possible for the wife to have possessed herself of a knife from the dining-table, because afraid of being helpless and alone at night with a man who was drunk and not himself. It was, also, possible, but not evidence, that he had wakened late in the night and annoyed her while in a wild, ungoverned state, and that she had, in her desperation, struck at him when his back was turned, and struck deep. She was his wife. "It was not a case of protecting her honor," said the coroner, "but of getting rid of someone she felt, at that moment, she loathed. She had been deceived, and all feeling for Hubert Kennedy was dead. She had discovered, too late, that she was bound to a dipsomaniac, and, possibly, in a fit of disgust and loathing, she killed him—when his back was turned. He did not wish to lay undue emphasis on that point, but it made all the difference to the case. Had she struck him in the chest, it might have been called an impulse of self-defense, therefore, *manslaughter*; but this was no impulse, but a determination to be rid of a monster in human shape. To her he had become a monster. In her hysterical fear she exaggerated her own helplessness. She had no desire for intimacy with a man in his condition, and to save herself an alarming ordeal—there seemed no reason to suppose she was in danger of her *life*—she had killed him, and then—run away.

"She ran away. If the crime had been committed by anyone else, she would have remained on the spot to send, herself, for the police; not have left his body to be discovered by others, and for them to do the needful.

"There was not much good considering the man who had given his help in the emergency. He need not have been a friend of hers, or been, in any way, interested in her to render her assistance. He had doubtless gone away the moment he saw he was of no further use. Very likely, after the inquest, he would, himself, communicate with the police and relate all he knew. It was to be hoped he would lose no time in doing so. In the meantime, who else was the most likely person to have done this deed? His bearer was a wage-earner, and scarcely the one to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs; for there were times when he must often have found service with a drunkard quite a lucrative job. It was a common thing for a bearer to supplement his wages when opportunity offered, and to regard the act as meritorious. There was not a shadow of suspicion attaching to him. Mr. Bolton's servants had, similarly, no reason to kill their sahib's friend who must often have tipped them at week-ends. So we come to the consideration of the bride's case. The jury must weigh well"—etc., etc. Thus the coroner.

The jury brought in a unanimous verdict of

"Wilful Murder" against Judith Kennedy, and the court dispersed.

God!—his little Judy!—more sinned against than sinning! To be tried, when found, for MURDER—the murder of her husband! Larry's throat felt dry and parched, his heart beat heavily. "They shall not find her! by God, they shall not!" he cried within himself.

"What's the matter, Larry?" his sister asked him from across the table, and he looked up unseeingly. The need to pull his wits together was urgent, and he smiled vacantly while he searched his mind for a reasonable excuse to offer for his pallor and nervousness.

"I have been feeling queer ever since I rose," said he, passing his hand across his forehead. "Reaction after the long drive, I suppose. I must have exercise."

"Poor old dear!" said Josephine, unconvinced, passing him his coffee. "Don't put away the paper," as he proceeded to fold it up small enough to put in his pocket, "I have not yet read it."

"I—I beg your pardon. It was very absent of me!" Larry colored hotly.

"I pinch every box of matches I lay hands on," laughed John, who was hurrying through his breakfast. "But I never have the temptation to pinch newspapers."

"I wouldn't have been so keen," said Josephine,

"but that the report of that inquest should be in to-day, and I expect it is very exciting. What's the verdict?"

Larry thanked Providence, mentally, that Judith was late, and replied huskily—"Murder. Wilful Murder against——" he choked.

"The wife? I thought as much. It couldn't be anyone else. 'Judith'—a namesake of Judy's!—she'll hate that."

"Please don't refer to it in her presence. Things of this sort throw her back. That was one of the reasons why I was subconsciously carrying off your paper—that she might not set eyes on the report of the inquest."

"I see! Poor dear. I did not know she was as nervous as that. Personally, I take a melancholy pleasure in reading every gruesome detail of murders and such-like horrors."

II

Breakfast at Jamunghur usually took place in a sheltered corner of the verandah where a trailing bogainvillier on a bamboo lattice broke the rays of the morning sun into a million golden flecks of light that ornamented the tiles on the floor in fanciful profusion. The air was cool and fresh with the first breath of winter, and flowers made flaming spots of color in the garden, adding their perfume to the gentle breeze blowing up from the river.

To Judith, it was a fascinating spectacle, that

colorful garden with flowering shrubs she had never seen before, and such a wealth of roses coming rapidly into bloom; the scarlet hibiscus nodding in the sunlight; the ixora ablaze all over and looking like a vermilion shrub; lily-white tube roses, and giant sunflowers as golden as the morning sun.

As she entered the verandah, she was compelled to pay a tribute to the "morning glory" climbing a pillar, its blue, trumpet-shaped flowers as tender as the wings of a butterfly.

"You have a sweet, lovable home, Jo," she cried, as she touched the veined petals, lightly. "You must be a wonderful gardener!"

"It is wonderful soil, my dear. Come and have your breakfast, or it will be cold."

"I am disgracefully late," said Judy, kissing her cheek and smiling a greeting at John. Larry she had kissed earlier through a gap in the *pardar* that separated their rooms. Her eyes falling on the newspaper, she drew it towards her.

"Jo has to read it first, dear," said Larry rather breathlessly with a look of such appeal at his sister, that she came, immediately, to the rescue.

"I could wait—only you are having a rest cure, I understand, and newspapers are not for people who are troubled with nerves. So——" and she took the paper out of Judy's hand with smiling determination, "Dr. Josephine Lester says NO!"

"It is dear of you to take such good care of

me," said Judy, "but you are all in danger of exaggerating my condition."

"You won't go far wrong if you do as Jo advises for your health, Judy. She's the Medical Adviser-in-Chief on the estate. Even the villagers prefer her remedies to those of the Civil Surgeon at Panighat." Larry was glad to see the color returning to Judy's face and the smile to her eyes. How soon she was learning to forget the terrible tragedy of that night! Just as well, otherwise, it might have sent her mad. If possible, he meant that she should never know all he was going through in trying to save her from pain and fear. If she saw that report in the paper, he believed she would collapse. She would have no heart to carry on till they could manage to slip out of the country.

"Has Larry told you the arrangement we have come to?" asked John, rising to go about his day's work. "No?—then make him tell you now—he and Jo can explain. I must be off." He kissed his wife as a parting habit, and ran down to where an impatient horse was pawing at the gravel, a *sais* hanging on to the headstall, and was soon clattering out of the gate.

"What arrangement?" Judy asked with interest.

"You are a precious husband for a dear little wife!" Josephine reproached her brother. "Fancy not tell her the news!" Larry has purchased this property as John has no money to keep it going, and so now it belongs to you Judy."

"Me?" Judy's surprise almost gave her away.

"Both of you. We are just servants of the estate. John is the manager on a monthly screw, and will work all the better, now, that he is not depressed with anxieties. He has been a naughty boy, speculating too heavily in grain, and we are all but 'stoney broke'!"

"Oh, dear! But that will never be the same. You cannot be happy!" Judy cried, full of solicitude.

"It will be just the same, for we are not going to turn out. To all intents and purposes, John continues master here; for I can't see Larry spending more than a month or so in India, once in a while. You, too. You will want London and pretty clothes. I have no use for either, being a real *jungli walla** !"

"You need not publish the transfer to the district," said Larry. "I much prefer that the people round about should continue to believe the place belongs, still, to John."

"That is mighty generous of you!"

"It's only an investment to me. One of many, and I want it to make no difference whatever to your life, old thing."

"You are a real dear!" said Jo.

"I am learning every day the height and depth of Larry's goodness," said Judy, her eyes filling with tears. "I believe God was so weary of human

* Dweller in the wilderness.

frailty when He made Larry, so that He created a faultless being in the likeness of Himself. I can believe in God's goodness since I have known Larry!"

"Oh! what a tribute! Larry you should be proud!"

But Larry was too anxious and preoccupied to appreciate so much extravagant praise when he was full of shame at having to deceive such dear people as his sister and John; he, therefore, frowned impatiently and strolled away.

"He is so modest, that praise makes him uncomfortable. He was always so," said Josephine.

"Nevertheless, it is the truth," said Judy, running lightly after him and linking a small hand within his arm.

Left alone, Josephine opened the paper, and was soon immersed in the account of the Kennedy inquest.

III

Later on, when her house-keeping duties were over, she found Judy on a garden bench sheltered from the sun by a *pipal* tree, enjoying the sight of coolie women weeding the walks. Larry had left her to write mail letters that could no longer be postponed, and she was thoroughly entertained watching the way the women squatted on their heels and picked with finger and thumb at the

blades that peeped through the gravel. Time seemed no object in the day's work. She expressed her amusement to Mrs. Lester, who understood native character thoroughly.

"That's because they are paid by the day," said Josephine. "If it were the custom to pay by the 'job,' you would see the difference! They would then use an implement to scrape away the weeds a yard a minute." She seated herself beside Judy and, presently, the latter found herself answering questions which were put in seeming innocence; but they threatened to encroach on dangerous ground. In a moment she was nervous and fearful of giving everything away. It was Larry's idea that the Lesters should be deceived—not her's, and she wished he would come back to answer Jo's questions.

"I am very romantic, though you may not believe it, so do tell me all about yourself and Larry—when you met, and how you met, and where you married. I think you two were amazingly quick about it? Was it at a registry office?"

Judy longed for an earthquake or any sudden diversion.

"That is Larry's secret," she said with beating heart. "I'll ask him to tell you all about it."

"You needn't worry—I did not mean to be impertinent, Judy. I suppose 'Judy' stands for Judith?"

"Yes," was the monosyllabic reply.

"That is a lovely car of yours. Did Larry bring it out with him, or buy it in Calcutta?"

"He bought it in Calcutta as he wanted a large touring car."

"I can see he is devoted to you. I hope, dear, you'll always be happy." Yet Jo did not look as if she thought the prospect was a certainty. Every now and again, Judy caught a penetrating glance from her shrewd eyes, and it made her tremble. What if Jo were already beginning to suspect the lie? The fact of there being any need for so much reserve on her own part was enough to make Jo suspect anything!

Judy did not know that Jo had been reading the story of the Kennedy tragedy, or that she had picked up the one and only handkerchief Judy possessed, and had dropped, belonging to the old stock marked "J.K." and was now carrying it about in the bosom of her gown.

Before Josephine left her, she said something that sounded very strange to Judy.

"I hope you will never think that I am inquisitive or prying. Larry is my dear brother—the dearest thing on earth—and I love him. For his sake I would stick at nothing. For his sake I would try to be even what I am not. I would lie and cheat and fight the world, and you may guess that these things are foreign to my nature. It is only that I want to understand certain things—clearly—so as to be on my guard—that's all. I am no

fool, and I have seen that there is grave trouble somewhere. Please regard me as a friend—for Larry's sake—not an enemy." She was gone before Judy could think of a suitable reply.

IV

That afternoon they had a visitor, Anthony Long, a young man tall and slim with a lean, good-looking face, who had charge of a factory three miles away. Like themselves, he was without nearer neighbors, and Judy learned that he and the Lesters were dependent on each other for recreation and games in the lonely days. He used, frequently, to ride over for tennis, and stay to potluck, spending the evening in three-handed bridge.

From the first, Larry and Judy liked him; from the first, he lost his boyish heart to Judy. To him, she was the loveliest girl he had seen, and it was just his luck that he should meet her after her marriage, instead of before!

All evening he stared adoringly at Judy as at a beautiful picture, forgetting his manners in his adoration, which created a great deal of chaff afterwards, when the family were again alone.

"My brother, Larry Sherman—Mrs. Sherman," Jo had said, and Larry was grateful that she had remembered.

They played tennis, and sat on the dry grass till dusk, drinking iced whisky and vermouth till

the dread of snakes sent them into the verandah.

"I do hope you are going to make a long stay, Mrs. Sherman," said Tony Long.

"For months and months, and months!" said Judy despairingly.

"Which means you are already fed up?"

"Oh, no! It only means that my soul hankers for England."

"Judy has very pretty frocks which will be old-fashioned if she has to stay too long," said Jo mischievously. "She must think of them."

"Then we must arrange occasions for her to wear them for our benefit," said Tony. "You mightn't believe it, but I have great taste in women's clothes. I always criticized my sister's."

"Let's have a party," said John, unexpectedly, who never, by any chance, accepted invitations to parties.

"Hear, hear!" said Tony.

"What sort of party?" asked practical Jo.

"Any sort. There's tennis, and shooting, and the river, if you would like to risk drowning. Dancing, too, on the verandah, to the gramophone."

"And where will the company stay the night?"

"Turn them all out at eleven. They, most of them, have cars, and can go home with our blessing when we've had enough of them."

"How would you like that?" Jo asked Larry.

"What does Judy say?"

"There speaks the dutiful husband!" exclaimed Jo.

"It might be nice for the frocks," said Judy, smiling in the way Larry loved, "but I am not in love with strangers."

"Nor am I," said Larry. "Why can't we live a simple life?"

"And let *me* see the frocks?" said Tony. "Surely my appreciation will be sufficiently gratifying to make it worth while."

"If you promise not to have a party," said Judy, "I'll wear a new frock every day for a fortnight, and begin the round again when you have all forgotten what the first ones looked like."

"Do you ride?" asked Tony.

"No," said Larry, for her, "but I am going to teach her soon."

"Consider yourself snubbed," said Jo.

"But not squashed," said Tony. "If Mrs. Sherman likes, I'll teach her how to scull. Now, just get out of this!" he said playfully to Larry, before the latter could object. "Give me a chance, sometimes, of enjoying your wife's society."

"Many times," laughed Judy taking pity on him. "I shall boat with you whenever you like, Mr. Long."

"I'm *Tony* or nothing," said he stoutly, looking Larry full in the face.

"And I'm Judy and everything!" said she entering into the spirit of the fun. "Larry, too, is *Larry*. So we are all agreed."

Jo looked at the transformation in her face the little diversion had made, and could readily understand Larry's devotion. If she had been like this when they had played about together on the ship, it was not surprising that he fell in love and married her.

Larry, too, saw and was glad to see her expand under the warmth of friendliness, yet wondered at her ability to shake off the haunting horror of the act which had driven her a fugitive from the law. No matter—so long as she revived, poor, persecuted soul, and was able to take a pleasure again in living—he was ready to take on his own shoulders the burden of her trouble, if only she could be saved from depression and fear!

CHAPTER VI

CLOSING IN

FOR the rest of the week, Tony was "daily bread" at the Lesters' bungalow at Jamunghur, and welcomed by Larry because of the diversion he created for Judy who was learning again to smile. Though he was still suffering acutely from suspense and anxiety, watching the papers daily for news of fresh activities of the police with regard to the Kennedy case, he, too, found he could shake off his burdens for the moment and find amusement in games and light conversation.

Towards the end of the week, Billy Dallas, a young Assistant Superintendent of Police called in his two-seater Singer, and was kept by the Lesters to tennis and dinner. Driving over twenty miles of bumpy roads was nothing to him, nor the prospect of returning to his quarters, at Panighat, after midnight, for he was accustomed to touring the district in all seasons and, at a pinch, even to sleeping in his car.

"Billy is a great boy," said John, as the car turned in at the gate and Tony walked down the steps to meet it. "He dosen't mind what he has to go

through if there is a pretty face at the other end."

"He has been hearing accounts, by post from Tony, of Judy's youth and charm, and won't be left out in the cold!" said Jo. "Panighat is dull these days with so few women, and all so unattractive."

"What will you do with the two of them, Judy?" teased John.

"Flirt with both, of course," Judy replied as a joke.

"I guess I shall have my time cut out trying to keep Larry busy!"

"Larry means to be on hand to see there's fair play and no favor," said he.

"Not very exciting for you, old son," laughed Jo.

"On the contrary," said Larry. "I am thinking it will be too much for my nerves if Billy, too, means to come every day!" At which there was a general laugh.

Billy was small and boyish, with a stammer and a determination to cure it with garrulousness. He talked a great deal and not always wisely; but because of his good nature and willingness to oblige, his friends gave him a hearty welcome.

When they were sitting in a circle round a "peg table" enjoying iced drinks after tennis, he froze Larry's blood in his veins by asking, *à propos* of nothing in particular:

"Have any of you been reading the Kennedy murder case?"

"You mean the fellow at Garden Reach who was blind drunk on his honeymoon and was stuck in the back by his wife?" asked Tony. "I should think so! Most interesting affair that has happened for years."

"Don't you think it's about time we changed for dinner?" asked Jo, catching an imploring glance from Larry's eye and noting Judy's sudden rigidity.

"It's early yet," said John, obtusely. "I think it was the most short-sighted thing for Mrs. Kennedy to bolt after doing it. She should have stuck it out and pleaded self-defense."

"It's going to make all the difference when she is caught and put on her trial," said Tony. "But they're taking rather long to find her and the servants. They must all have scattered to the four winds; the servants, for very fear of a police inquiry."

While they were speaking, there was a look of stark surprise so unmistakable on Judy's face, that both Larry and Jo were arrested and puzzled beyond understanding.

"What is that you said?" from Judy to John. "Did you say he was *murdered*?" Her expression was tense with eagerness.

John, remembering, too late, Larry's wish to keep exciting news from Judy, blundered badly.

"Er—so I believe—at least one never knows what to believe of the things one hears—a——"

"It was all in the papers," stammered Billy eager to enlighten her. "The coroner's inquest—didn't you see it? His wife is supposed to have stabbed him in the back—in fact, he was found dead on the floor of her room with the knife sticking in his back. His father found him next day in the deserted house—everyone bolted, bride and all."

At that moment, Larry seeing Judy's face grow ashen and believing she was about to faint, tipped over the table with his foot sending the tray of glasses, the whisky and soda, with a crash to the floor and drenching her skirt with the liquor. In the confusion which ensued he raised Judy and half carried her to her room. The rest might think she had been hurt, it was better that—than their seeing her faint at the mention of the tragedy.

He closed the door of the room and quickly restored her with cold water on brow and lips. "Drink it," said he. "You will be better presently."

"What did he say, Larry?" she cried, clutching his hands and breathing hurriedly. "He was telling us that Hubert was murdered? It wasn't true, was it? It couldn't have been true?"

"Why, Judy?" said he, believing, for the moment, that she was pretending ignorance, and greatly hurt that she should think it necessary after all the confidence which existed between them.

"Was it—can it be true?" she gasped in frightened tones. "He said—someone said—'she would be caught and put on her trial'—was that meant for *me*?"

"Hush!" said he, soothingly. "You knew, didn't you, that it was bound to follow—that is why I brought you away."

Judy sat bolt upright, for the moment stricken dumb. "I seem to be all mixed up. What are you talking of, and what am I?" she asked when able to speak coherently. "Hubert, you say—they say—he has been *murdered*. When did you know that?"

"When Mr. Kennedy came to me at the hotel—the afternoon we left Calcutta. I had not known it before."

"Then it is of that he was talking when I saw him? Hubert is dead?—all this time he has been dead, and you never told me?"

"I—I thought you knew," said Larry lamely, convinced by her manner that she was either out of her mind or innocent. "Good God! Your very anxiety to hide from Mr. Kennedy made me—made me——"

"Made you think I did it, *Larry*? You have been thinking all this time that I did it?" She seized him by the lapels of his coat and shook him in her excitement. "You have been looking upon me all this time as a murderess! Oh, God!—and I believed you loved me!"

"I *do* love you! I love you more than life itself, Judy. What has that to do with the other?"

"You could love a murderess!"

"I loved you and could not change—that's all! I am willing to give my life to save you."

"But—*Larry!*" She tried to calm herself with an effort. "I did not do it. I did not even know he was dead!"

Larry looked with puzzled eyes into her face, searching it for proof that she was insane. *Did not do it* when he had found blood on her dress—more than a few scratches from thorns could produce! They were more like splashes. Good God! Could it have happened in a moment of mental aberration?—an impulse which was succeeded by complete forgetfulness?—or was she lying?"

"Judy, tell me all over again what happened when he came to your door demanding admittance. You said the door burst in and he fell at your feet. He was found face-downward on that very spot, I understand, with a knife in his back—dead. Dead for hours!"

"And you thought I did it!" she cried despairingly, her eyes wide with a look of such innocence that Larry needed no proofs.

"My darling! thank God you didn't do it!—oh, I thank God with all my heart!"

"Swear that you believe me, Larry. I cannot prove it—but were I to die this moment," she said solemnly, "I should still say, as I hope for

salvation, that I know nothing of who did it—I did not even know he was dead!"

"I swear I believe it," cried he, snatching her into his arms and kissing her passionately. "What a load has been lifted from my mind!"

"And you brought me here and passed me off as your wife—all to throw dust in the eyes of the world and the police?"

"I thought you understood that——?"

"I wanted to hide so as not to be *made* to return to Hubert. I hated the sight of all the Kennedys. I could not bear to recall the horror of Hubert's state—his attack on the door—the fear of falling into a drunkard's power with no one at hand to protect me."

"Someone must have struck that blow from behand while he was forcing the door," said Larry, thoughtfully. "The act was committed while he fell forward against you. It accounts for the blood stains on your gown. There was no time to withdraw the knife—whoever did it, must, that instant, have run away."

"Someone was there, Larry. I heard voices!"

"It would have been better had we stayed and braved it out—only—without evidence to back your statement, I am afraid it would be difficult to convince the court——"

Judy shuddered at the word. "If I could not convince the court, would I be hanged—?" she asked fearfully.

Larry pressed her to him. "I shouldn't let them do it. I would never let such a wicked miscarriage of justice happen."

"How could you prevent it?" She shivered in his arms.

"Leave that for the present. We are now let in for a deal of worry and trouble—but, cheer up, sweetheart, you don't know what a world of difference it has made to me to feel that our cause is good. I made a horrible mistake in coming away—but, at least, my beloved girl is innocent. Someone will surely be found to support you. If the worst comes to the worst *I* swear before God that I, Larry, shall *prove* you are innocent!" He kissed her as in consecration of his oath.

"Shall we have to continue in hiding here?"

"We must. I don't see what is to be gained by giving ourselves up, for we cannot call a soul, at present, to prove that you did not do the deed."

"Yet you believe me?"

"I want no better proof than your word and the look in your sweet eyes."

"Now, I understand why you spoke with such certainty of our getting married," said Judy, reminiscently.

"Yes. We could marry now if it did not put us in the way of immediate arrest. We would have to give our real names, and that would finish us."

"Why should they arrest *you*?"

"Because I took you away and hid you. I should

get it in the neck, right enough, if they found you 'guilty.' Penal servitude! not that I should mind what became of me."

"And I?"—she hid her face in his breast and trembled from head to foot. "So you risked all that for me! Oh, Larry! There is no one in the world like you."

II

They became aware that Josephine was knocking at the door.

"How is Judy? I hope she is not hurt?" she asked.

"She's all right, thanks, but the shock has unnerved her. Will you excuse her from dinner, Jo?" Larry replied, without admitting her

Jo was pleased to let Judy rest, and was surprised, when she saw her brother, later, to see how much relieved were his spirits and readier was his laugh. She watched him narrowly throughtout the meal, and when the guests had departed, drew him into her own little sewing-room, her face strangely grave.

"Larry," said she coldly, "I am cut to the quick that you should have treated me in this way. If you had to hide your *mistress* under my roof, at least, you might have trusted me by explaining the whole situation. You have treated me with distrust, and deceived me."

"Judy is not my mistress," said Larry determined, before anything, to correct the wrong impression.

"You have yourself to blame if I have concluded that she is."

"You might recall the arrangement I asked you to make when we arrived. We do not share the same room. I love Judy and we are engaged—but I respect her too greatly to let you think what is not true."

"She is Mrs. Kennedy!"

"Yes," said Larry.

"Wanted by the police for murdering her husband!"

"She is innocent. Judy did not do it. But, because circumstantial evidence is too strong for us, I have been trying to hide her till it is possible to get her out of the country."

"How are you so sure of her innocence?"

"You will be sure of it yourself. Now that you have discovered the truth, talk to her. Let her tell you all she knows, and you will believe, as I do, that there was someone there behind the scenes who did it. My poor little Judy would never have had the nerve, the initiative and daring, nor the strength, for such a deed."

"Why did you deceive me? Why didn't you come to me and say 'I want to save an innocent girl from persecution by the law—help me to hide her here.' I should gladly have consented, and

taken her under my wing—not allowed her to compromise herself in the way she has done here, passing as your wife! Besides, how can I know you are telling me the truth regarding your relations? You are a man—men are notoriously callous in these matters. What do I know of her?"

"You know me as a man of honor. I swear to you that Judy is innocent of wrong. She is not guilty of having killed her husband, and she is a good and pure woman. Jo, dear Jo!" he pleaded with all his Irish charm, "forgive the mistake. I think I have been a fool in more ways than one. But I had no time to think. I have been so rushed, and there is so much danger threatening the girl I adore, that you can readily understand how it was I feared to tell you the truth concerning us, lest you would not believe it, and turned us out! Judy needs friends. She has only me in this country! Rather than see her hounded for a crime she did not commit, I would confess to it, myself. I would give myself up and let them hang me, so that she might go free."

"If she has any grit she would never permit that!"

"She could not prevent it if I gave myself up and there was no one else to make chargeable with the crime. She, at any rate, is guiltless!"

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" cried Jo. "Of course I will befriend her, believing that it is the truth she is telling us. I can't think her capable of such

an act! She could never hide her guilt—it would be impossible, unless she were hardened to crime, and she is not that!"

"You have only to know her, as I do, to see how mad it is of anyone to fix the guilt on her just because she was, apparently, with the murdered man at the last!"

"Nevertheless, it will go hard with her if ever she is put on her trial. The motive is there—fear, desperation! *Quite* enough——"

"Does John know?"

"No. He doesn't dream of it. Nor shall I tell him. He is so blunt, it is impossible for him to act a double part. If he knew, he might not be inclined to take Judy's word on trust, and he might not care to live under the same roof as the woman who slew her husband—for so it might appear to him. No, John need not be told."

"I am sorry for all the trouble I have brought upon you! But, if the worst happens, it need not be known that you were aware of Judy's identity as the missing bride. That will save a charge of conspiracy against you and John. There is no suspicion attached to me, yet. My name has not been mentioned as concerned in the matter, so don't hit no cross bridges before we come to them."

"What about the car? It will eventually leak out that you left the hotel by car with a mysterious lady. 'Larrimore Straughan,' who was at the Kennedys' wedding as best man, left Calcutta giving

no one his address, and was known to have a lady with him who answers to the description of the bride. The number of the car you bought, has been registered—there will be a search for it."

Larry shuddered.

"The local police will ferret it out. Oh, Larry! I wonder you ever imagined you would be able to hide her anywhere! It is not possible."

Larry looked deeply depressed. "So it would seem! But I trust to luck. As to the car—it will have to be destroyed."

"Oh, what a misfortune. And such an expensive one."

"It is a source of danger, therefore it must go."

"Then don't tell me what you are going to do with it! I would rather not know."

"John must be told that I have sold it, and am going to make it over to the purchaser at Panighat railway station." Another lie! One lie breeds many, was proved in this case. Larry was growing hardened to the untruths he was obliged to add to the first he had invented since his arrival.

"I am thankful that Billy is not a brilliant specimen of the Indian Police, or we should awake to discover, one day, that he has the eyes of the local police focussed on you, and that escape is impossible!" said Jo, the picture of gloom.

CHAPTER VII

THE FATE OF THE LIMOUSINE

THE moon was not expected to rise till late, so that the roads were dark when Larry ran his car out of the garage and took the riverside way, ostensibly towards Panighat railway station, close on thirty miles away. It was not the usual route, being the longest, nor was the going good. Moreover, many small villages lay packed snugly on the river bank through which the track passed. To avoid these villages, Larry was obliged to make a detour, occasionally, across a field where ruts in the clay, caused by bullock carts, pointed to another road. Once, it brought him to a carter's homestead surrounded by bamboo fencing, and he had to back out under the advice of a surly native who addressed him in unfriendly accents in the darkness over the fence. As he was unable to understand a word, he took it for granted that he had no business there. He had no intention of driving to Panighat railway station, as was shown when he left the road and took the cart track through country not so much under cultivation, and where the villages were farther apart.

Softly the car hummed along, its searchlights making daylight on the track ahead. Judging by the pale light creeping skywards in the east, the moon was about to rise, for which he would not be grateful. Darkness suited his purpose better. As he knew nothing of the countryside, he drew up presently and descended, and, with an electric torch in his hand, examined the aspect of the bank above the river.

It was steep and heavily cracked at the edge. Below, the current swept the shore with a loud murmur. It looked dark and uninviting, a veritable grave of mystery. Larry suffered a twist of the heart as he thought of consigning his splendid car to such a doom, and, in imagination, saw it at the bottom of the deep river, rotting in soft clay and slime till melted and decayed, leaving only steel and machinery behind to rust and be discovered some future time when the river altered its course and another generation plied fishing boats on these waters.

With his torch to guide him, he crept down a footpath and arrived on the ledge below, where the earth was corrugated by the falling river which retreated, at the close of the rainy season, to its normal level. Being early November, he presumed it had reached as far as it would ever go, and he proceeded to measure the depth with a stone and string which he produced from his pocket.

It was astonishingly deep—Larry judged—quite

deep enough to hide the car from all possibility of discovery by river craft passing to and fro on the surface of the stream.

Climbing to the top, he squared his shoulders, set his jaw, and stifling his final regrets, put the splendid machine into motion.

Very slowly it crawled over the thick grass which grew to the edge of the bank, while he walked grimly beside it, thrilled with anticipation and reluctance, till he stood and watched it hesitate a moment against a clump of weeds, and then lurch heavily over.

The next instant there was the noise of its impact with the water—a startling sound in the stillness of the night, which no doubt, was heard a long distance away. He was glad he had seen no villages near by—that the spot was lonely and deserted, and that the noise, if noticed at a distance, would be put down to a falling bank; for such was of common occurrence all along the river, he had been told.

The deed was done. His beautiful purchase representing several thousand rupees, was equal to scrap-iron at the bottom of the river. It was painful to think of the excellence of its machinery, the refinement of its fittings, its conveniences, its improvements up-to-date, and to know that it was wrecked for all time.

Larry sat on the grass for some time listening to

the sound of bubbles rising to the surface, till he heard voices.

A group of natives were evidently approaching!

He lay flat in the darkness and watched nervously. But they were travellers along the path, and they passed conversing noisily together till their voices died in the distance.

When the moon rose and the landscape became clearly visible, he, once more, descended the path to see if any trace of the car was visible; but the current ran smoothly on its course, even the bubbles had ceased to rise.

Larry knew he was a long way from home, and that it was impossible for him to return before morning unless he had the luck to find a *dinghi* and someone to take him back, for the current was rapid and favorable; and, assisted by rowing, he was sure it could be done. Accordingly he trekked along the bank for half an hour till he came to a *ferry-ghat*. On the bank half a dozen huts clustered together; a fishing village lay further inland. Larry awoke the sleeping ferryman and explained his need in English. But the ferryman, a semi-nude, ape-like individual, as brown as the boat he owned, was benighted and uneducated, and was unable to follow his meaning. Signs were employed, money displayed. At length these together with the word "Jamunghur" conveyed to the dull minds of the ferryman and his

family what it was the sahib requested. He was apparently lost on the road—one of the sahibs who sometimes took the wrong road after a day's *shikar* and had to be helped to their destination. Whatever he had done with his gun was no concern of theirs. Good money was to be earned, and, peradventure, a fisherman could earn more in that one trip than his fish would give him in a week. So the ferryman called aloud to one "Jugloo." "Hi, Jugloo! Come hither"—a voluble message was screamed out into the night, and Larry waited till Jugloo appeared girding up his loins. When the matter was explained, Jugloo departed to fetch his crew of two, and the party entered one of the *dinghis* of which he was the skipper; after which, Larry was conveyed into the stream where the current instantly assisted the oarsmen to make remarkable progress.

Larry reclined amidships staring into the pale, moonlit heavens, his mind full of despondency and suspense. The air was cool and would have been sweet, but for the smell of fish arising from the bilgewater of the boat; the bank, as they passed, looked dark and irregular in outline, while, far across the river to the opposite shore, only grey mist and dark shadows marked the land.

He wondered, as he lay there, how much of the crime had come to light under police investigation. How far they had reached in their effort to trace Judy. Dear little innocent Judy. What wouldn't

he do to save her! He was prepared to go to any length.

When the *dinghi* arrived at the Lester's *ghat* at Jamunghur, it was broad daylight; the sun had risen and there was a stir of waking life in the factory. The indigo season being over, the mornings were quiet and late. John did not rise quite so early, and the servants took their cue from the head of the house.

Larry paid the boatman generously and made his way, unseen, to his room, glad to be back, but full of a restless longing for Judy and her loving appreciation of his latest sacrifice. He wanted to tell her of what he had done; he longed to hold her close in his arms for the comfort of her kisses, the solace of her beauty and love.

Was she awake? Would she let him go to her? Larry felt rebellious with the desire that consumed him, and ready to sneer at the hypocrisies of life. Judy was free; they were to be married the moment they had a chance; yet they were held apart, longing and loving, why? Why?

Larry was scarcely himself for the moment; forces within him impelled him to the door of Judy's room; he whispered her name.

There was no answer.

Then louder, he murmured: "Judy! Darling!"

When there was still no answer he was seized with alarm. Suppose she had left him? The thought was horrible. He could not contemplate

a future without Judy. For awhile he stood wondering if he should call and knock. But Jo might hear and wonder what was the matter, whereas, Judy might only be asleep.

The next instant Larry violated a code of honor, when he drew the door open and lifted the curtain behind it to look in. But the high back of the bed made it impossible for him to tell if she lay in it or not, so he tip-toed softly over the carpet, his heart pounding with guilt. How had he dared to invade this holy of holies, was his feeling the moment his eyes fell on her, asleep with the abandonment of a child—unconscious of prying eyes—and beautiful in her unconsciousness!

He gazed at her with his soul in his eyes adoring the beautiful innocence of her pose which made every natural curve a dream of loveliness. He longed with all his heart for the right to share her pillow, to draw her to his breast, to make her his own. He ached to press hot, burning kisses on her deliciously parted lips. Had he not earned an everlasting right to possess her! Was he not running untold risks for her?

Then, suddenly, by some trick of imagination, he saw the hangman's rope knotted about her slender, fair throat, and fear, the agony of his helplessness to save her, in spite of all he might do, overcame him, driving him from the room to his own, to kneel beside his bed and pray as he had never prayed before.

"Save my little girl! Oh, God, save her from this ghastly injustice. Give her to me that I might care for her and protect her as long as I live! But, if someone must pay for that crime, let them take me, not her."

II

At breakfast that morning, a paragraph in the paper, though alarming, seemed to offer respite. While Josephine poured out the coffee and John ate diligently he read that, so far, none of the servants employed by Bolton at his house in Garden Reach had been discovered. A taximan had come forward declaring that he had driven a sahib from the Kennedys' house at Allipur to Garden Reach. He had been told to follow the car in which were the bride and groom. He had waited in the lane all night, and towards morning the sahib and a lady had come hurriedly from the house, had entered the taxi, and he had driven them to the "Great Northern Hotel." He had been startled to note a splash of blood on the lady's gown.

It was thereupon discovered that Mr. Larrimore Straughan, who had been best man at the wedding, had left the hotel suddenly with a lady, on the afternoon of that day, in a large touring car, purchased that same day from Mrs. Murdock, who was now with her husband on the high seas. This car had been traced as far as Allahabad, and there lost, for the time being.

It was here that Larry began to breathe again. The police were on the wrong scent, and he fervently hoped they would continue searching for him in the United Provinces till obliged to acknowledge themselves mistaken. Evidently there had been another touring car on the road that day, and it had gone to Allahabad, a common road for tourists.

Josephine took Judy her breakfast on a tray, and held a long conversation with her, by which they came to a better understanding.

Together they tried to puzzle over the mystery of Hubert Kennedy's death. Could it have been done by the Eurasian woman whom Judy suspected had been Hubert's mistress? But, no, "Janey" loved him too unselfishly to have done such a brutal thing. She seemed resigned to the loss, and was concerned more for his happiness and well-being than her own. Jo, however, thought jealousy was often a motive for acts of sudden violence, and Eastern natures were ungoverned and temperamental.

"Perhaps," said Jo, as an afterthought, "there was someone there who owed him a grudge?"

Judy shook her head helplessly. If so, she had no knowledge of him. A bearer was in the house at one time, for he had locked up the whisky, which, she gathered, he had, later on, been compelled to produce for Hubert's gratification. There was no object in his killing *his* master.

"It lies between the girl and someone unknown."

"Never Janey!"

"Then someone unknown."

"You don't think in your heart that I did it?" Judy asked anxiously.

"Not for a moment," said Jo, kissing her. "I could not think it for a moment now I know you well. Besides, you could not hide the truth very long—yours is too ingenuous a nature. Had you done it in self-defense, you would have told one of us by now, or both. The need to confess would have made you ill."

"I wonder how you know that? I believe I should, in that case, have given myself up. Indeed, so as to clear up the mystery, I would give myself up, now, to stand on my defense just to defy the coroner's verdict, but Larry would also be arrested and punished for hiding me away, because he knows the police are looking for me. It might mean penal servitude for him if the case went against me. So we have, now, to go on as we are. It is very wearing, Jo. Poor Larry!"

"If you and Larry could only marry I know he, for one, would feel happier to share all that comes to you."

"But that seems impossible if signing the register will lead directly to our discovery!"

"I am not so sure that you need sign your own names to make the marriage legal. But it will be better to wait, now you are here, especially

as it is so soon after Hubert's tragic death."

Josephine was much happier after her conversation with Judy, and, woman-like, required no proof to justify her firm faith in the girl's innocence. She was thoroughly content with her own judgment after studying Judy's demeanor and finding that the girl could look her full in the eyes without faltering or shrinking. It was her opinion that one would have to be a hardened sinner, old in the ways of crime, to be able to look others full in the eyes and not quail when guilty of so terrible a thing as murder.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MARCH OF EVENTS

IN the month that passed nothing occurred to give either Larry or Judy anxiety. They seemed to have found a wonderful haven of security where the strangers they met were delighted to know them and none viewed them with suspicion. Why should they? Jo ruminated; for the young couple were received on the guarantee of the Lesters, who were old and respected residents of the district. On what grounds was it possible for their friends to doubt the fact that Larry "Sherman" was Josephine Lester's brother? Her maiden name was not known to her neighbors, most of whom were "birds of passage," being officials liable to transfer, and rarely more than three years in any district. The moment an official settled down and hoped to spend a happy domesticated time, taking an interest in chickens and a kitchen garden, he was transferred lest the natives should imagine he was becoming too friendly with his European neighbors and likely to show favoritism in matters of law.

The few planters who had once known that Mrs.

Lester had been a *Straughan*, had, naturally, forgotten the fact and did not think of questioning *Sherman*. They, one and all, liked Larry immensely and treated Judy as an asset in the district. She was told continually that it was hoped she meant to make a long stay and, that the day she and Larry left for "home," the residents would proclaim a *hartal*, which had become a popular word for expressing mourning, since it had been in common use by natives whenever anxious to protest against political measure.

The times were so peaceful that Larry could, almost, imagine he had been dreaming a horrible dream; only Judy was very real and growing more and more lovely and desirable every day, so that he could not, altogether, forget they were living, as it were, over a mine which might explode any day. It was a matter for thankfulness to him that India was so large and that there was a very small likelihood of his meeting any of the passengers that had travelled out on the same boat with him and Judy. They had scattered on landing, many having gone to Eastern and Northern Bengal; many to the U. P.; some having remained in Calcutta. He, even began to see the possibility of taking Judy home in the near future and marrying her on arrival in England.

They would, often, discuss the hope, and build plans for its realization; when Judy would make

Larry so happy by her spontaneous demonstrations of affection, that he was never jealous of Tony and Billy who quarreled for her favors.

When Billy started to teach Judy how to drive his two-seater, Tony would sulk for hours and go without food. When Tony took her on the river and showed her how to scull, Billy behaved as though crossed in love. And Jo laughed, hugely entertained, for boys were the most unreasonable of human creatures when suffering from the love fever.

"It amuses me," she told Larry, "because I can't help wondering what they would do if they only knew she is as free as air."

"But she is not!" from Larry, indignantly.

"As far as the law goes—not her affections," amended Jo; "and might yet marry anyone she chooses."

"Don't forget, she has already chosen me."

"As far as they are concerned, they have no hope, whatever, and still spend all their leisure and thoughts on her—it is too silly!"

"I don't mind Billy so much, he is such an infant. But Tony is a hard nut to crack. Judy should go easy with him, for he is badly hit. I am not surprised, are you? for Judy is all that a man has ever dreamed of finding in woman. She is feminine to her finger tips; she is beautiful, physically; and her nature is absolutely lovable."

"In fact, to you she is perfection! So it should be, when a man's in love. I do feel so sorry for you, as it may be a long time before you can be married."

II

When Tony and Billy dined at each other's houses they would take a shy pleasure in discussing Judy "Sherman" though they never abused her "husband." Larry was a sport. He loved his "wife," which was as natural, under the circumstances, as breathing. They could not quarrel with him for that, or because he was her husband, so they left him out of the conversation and tried to forget that he existed.

"Have you noticed what pretty teeth she has?" said Billy one evening.

"They are so even and white. It is a treat to see her laugh," said Tony.

"I think the shade of her hair is delightful. What would you call it?"

"Amber—like the shade of her eyes. Clear amber, when the sun shines through it."

"B-but her eyes are grey, what are you thinking of!"

"What are *you* thinking of! They are clear amber with specks all over."

"Rot. Anyone would call them hazel, which is a mixture of grey and tan. If you look into

them you will see grey flecks in them—and sometimes they are more grey than brown."

"They are anything you like—amber, hazel, grey, brown! I don't care; but I do think they are the sweetest eyes I have seen," said Tony, dreamily.

"Same here. With a little encouragement, I'd lose my head completely."

"Hands off!" growled Tony. "I knew her first, to say nothing of the fact that we are real pals already. She has no use for you."

"Or *you*. S-she's married, and that's the end of it," sighed Billy. Tony said nothing, but a subtle gleam in his eye betokened the contempt he had for the "hypocrisies of life," as he termed the moral standards of society. He was young enough to have formed no standards of his own, as yet, while looking on at life, which older men than he lived fast and furiously; and the unattainable was always attractive.

"I am willing to bet she enjoys the motor lessons more than boating," said Billy. "Yesterday she took the wheel for the first time, alone, and nearly sent us both to kingdom-come. I should have been watching the road; but I was watching her face, instead, and we almost crashed into a bullock cart coming round the bend. She avoided it by a miracle, and would have put us over the bank had I not grabbed the wheel and the brakes in time. Lord, it was such a mix up—and she as white as a lily. Gosh! but it was worth anything for the

pleasure of soothing her fears, and restoring confidence."

Tony said nothing while he filled a pipe, but, for the moment, he looked as if it would give him the greatest pleasure in life to wring his friend's neck.

The next time Tony took Judy boating, he allowed the boat to drift into a sheltered spot under a high bank where the branches of a tamarind tree shut out the rays of the setting sun, and he dropped into the seat beside her at the stern.

"I am hot, and want to talk to you," he said insinuatingly. "You never talk to me!"

"Oh, what a fib! What have I been doing all afternoon, but talking to you."

"Oh, that! That's not what I want. I want a heart-to-heart talk with you."

"I am quite ready to listen," said Judy, wondering if he intended to confide some love affair to her for which he wanted feminine sympathy.

"You are such a dear!" he said sentimentally. "I wonder if you would let me confess to you."

Judy laughed at his tone. If he wanted a confidante, she was ready to be sympathetic.

"You, sometimes, play polo and tennis and flirt with the girls at Panighat—and fall in love, many times. Perhaps you are in love, now?"

"I am," dropping his voice while he caressed the ends of her sash. "I am terribly in love. I dream,

and think, and hope—despairingly, if the paradox is possible! and live only when I—I am with—*her*."

"I hope you see *her* often. For to live only *sometimes*, is poor fun for you!"

"It is never fun, any time. It is more like tragedy."

Judy winced at the word which had come to have a very personal meaning for her. "Poor Tony!"

"It is worth anything to hear you say that. Oh, Judy!"

"Is it very bad?" she laughed, encouragingly.

When he seized her hand she did not withdraw it, immediately, for fear of snubbing him. Judy was guiltless of flirting, for she knew herself as belonging to Larry, even though no legal tie existed between them. She loved Larry, and was, therefore in love with love; Tony's needs of sympathy in his consuming passion for "somebody" was very appealing.

"It is heaven, when you are kind!" murmured he, kissing her hand.

"What does it matter about me. Tell me of *her*."

"You are—*her*," said Tony too much in earnest to be grammatical. "I love you Judy—oh, love me a little—just a little!"

"Tony!" she cried astonished. "I thought you and I were such good pals!"

"We are, I hope—but how can I help loving you?"

Had Judy been married to Larry she might have been conventional enough to be indignant at Tony's confession and feel it her duty to snub him, royally. But she was a maid—unfettered. It was only love, and her engagement to Larry that bound her at all; so, for Tony, she felt sincerely sorry. It was her fault. Perhaps she had been too free with him—too friendly!

"But—Tony—what's the good? You know—you knew all the while——"

"Of course! I know there's Larry, worse luck! Do you think I don't suffer hell at the thought? What chance have I when there is—Larry!"

"Then why——"

"Can you ask? Who, really, can control one's heart? I have been in love with you from the first day we met. I cannot fight it. It has happened, and it seems like death if you are not going to be kind to me!" he choked and buried his face in his elbow.

"Oh, Tony—how mad of you!"

"I know it is madness, but it is very beautiful madness when I think of you also being mad along with me!"

"But Tony—that sort of madness has to have love to justify it."

"Don't I love you?" he asked, raising his head, and looking passionately into her eyes.

"Can you love two girls at the same moment?"

"NO! a thousand times no—All my love is for you——"

"And mine is for Larry. I could not love two men, Tony. I can like several; some more than others. But I *love* Larry."

Tony's head returned to his elbow, and he sobbed like a child.

Judy was amazed, then pitiful — she could understand his feeling, but had no sympathy for it because she had not coquetted with him or consciously made him love her.

"I am sorry, Tony. What am I to do?"

"Nothing, I suppose!" he groaned.

"You will have to get over it—stay away and try hard; then, when you feel it is all right, come along and we'll be friends."

"I could not stay away. To see you is food and drink for me."

"Foolish! Can't you take leave and go home for a bit? There are heaps of nice girls at home waiting to love you, Tony."

"I shall never love anyone but you. Find me another Judy like you, and I'll take her, trying to imagine she is all I love and want for my own."

"What shall I do with you, Tony, if you are going to come as usual, without making any effort to cure yourself of this folly?"

"Just leave me to my hell," he retorted with a sob. "You will know how it is with me—and per-

haps, some day, you will take pity on me and love me—even a little bit."

"I could love you quite a lot as a real pal and friend, Tony."

"I'll put up with that for the present, if you will, only, not be quite so nice to Larry before me. That's more than I shall be able to bear."

"Foolish boy!" and Judy put an arm across his shoulders coaxingly. He was such a boy after all! a mad, loving boy, who needed affection, and was deprived, by the loneliness of his life, till his perspective had altered, and he saw life out of drawing. Without being in love with him she wished to treat him affectionately, as a sister might, and console him, tenderly, but he would misunderstand—he *might* misunderstand! "Come—row me home—the evening is closing in."

"I have the devil's luck!" he cried emotionally. "Why did I not meet you first? Why was I fated to see and love you after you belonged to someone else? If there hadn't been Larry, you might have—loved me! Could you have loved me?"

"I don't know—for I love you now—like a sister."

"Do you prefer me to Billy?" he asked boyishly.

Judy laughed involuntarily. "Of course," she said soothingly. "Every time!"

"Well, thank God for that!"

Tony then took the oars and rowed her home, his face a picture of misery. All her wit and merry

sayings, conjured up to chase the gloom from his brow, went for nothing. Tony was thoroughly depressed.

III

Josephine watched the little comedy still greatly amused. Life had been dull at Jamunghur before the arrival of Judy and Larry. Up till then, Tony was a normal lad with nothing to desire but games and friendships. He was now a hopeless, tragic lover, and, daily, made a spectacle of himself for the entertainment of others, the last to realize his own ridiculousness. Larry was growing impatient and would one day become rude. Before then, Jo hoped that Judy would bring Tony to his senses.

One evening, Billy invited himself to potluck bubbling with news he could scarcely contain—

"I heard from my brother to-day," said he, proud of owning an elder brother in the country. "He says he is rather run down—Calcutta is such a beastly climate after the rains, and as Christmas up-country is better, he means to spend Christmas at Panighat with me."

"Splendid!" said Jo. "One more man for the dances at the Club."

"He doesn't dance, I'm afraid. Richard is a queer fellow—fancies himself as a private detective and is fond of poking about unearthing things the police fail to discover. His latest craze is the

Kennedy murder case. He thinks the police have made fools of themselves over it and writes that he means to show them a thing or two." Billy laughed unaware of the sudden, strained silence which had fallen on the group. Jo made herself busy with the dead leaves of a plant in the window, Larry was concentrating on filling a pipe, while Judy lay still in her chair, a hand shading her eyes. John, alone, showed interest and made matters worse by hoping that Billy's brother would justify his "immense conceit."

"He's a rare conceited devil," grinned Billy. "Thinks no one knows as much as he."

"What's his job?" asked John.

"He's like his friend, Gerard Bolton, a Stock Broker. They make pots of money and then lose it all in a day! I must say I prefer to count on a fixed salary. One, then, knows where one is. Bolton lost so much lately that he's trying to sell his famous house in Garden Reach—that one connected with the murder. He lent it to the Kennedy couple, I believe. But no one seems to want it. They say it is haunted."

"How haunted?" asked Jo."

"A figure of a woman has been seen at the top of the stairs. A native constable, whose duty it is to watch the house, took shelter inside it, once, shortly after the tragedy, while there was a thunderstorm and heavy rain, and he swears he saw a woman cross the landing and peep down at

him. He sh-shouted at her, but she vanished. He chased after her, but she was nowhere to be found. Another constable saw f-from one of the windows the same figure in the garden at dusk, and by the time he could reach the spot there was no one to be seen—the place was d-d-d-d——"

"Deserted? She must have run away. Possibly it was the 'missing bride'," said John. "She returns to look on the scene of her crime. Murderers generally do."

"My brother hints at another theory," said Billy. "Only he won't tell me. He thinks I talk too much."

At bedtime that night, Jo paid a visit in her room at Larry's request and found her deeply depressed.

"I wish he wasn't coming," said Judy. "Somehow, I feel there is more in this visit than the need of a change. He must have heard something. He has had letters from Billy—perhaps Billy has written very fully about—me? He is so devoted—so silly about everything I do. I wouldn't be surprised if his letters have been mostly about Larry and me, and his brother has got suspicions and wants to make sure."

"Nonsense! It is easy to get the wind up and imagine anything. Don't worry. Treat the situation naturally. I'll tell you what to do. Be charming to this fellow and take the wind out of his sails by making him also 'silly' about you—like

Billy and Tony. It will be the surest way of shutting his mouth if he has any lurking idea of identifying you with the woman they want."

"It's a dangerous game to play—besides, he is a man—not a boy and might be difficult to manage. Larry will hate it—he would be very unhappy if I made myself too nice to Mr. Richard Dallas."

"Larry would, surely, understand that it is part of the game. We have got to keep this man from prying too much. If he is diverted by sentiment, and admires you as Billy and Tony do, he will do anything rather than bring you trouble."

But Judy was nervous, obsessed by something like presentiment.

"I am afraid! I feel that something evil for us will come out of this man's visit. I wish he wasn't coming!"

CHAPTER IX

THE SLEUTH HOUND

SUNSET on a particular evening in December was a brief and gorgeous panorama of blood and fire, familiar only to the East. Clouds massed above the western horizon, were dyed in crimson and gold; shafts of light radiating from the setting sun, swept the arch of the heavens where every shade of color dissolved into the blue of limitless space; while below, the broad surface of the tranquil Ganges reflected the grand celestial tableau of changing hues as they faded into the grey mists of approaching night.

Judy stood entranced as she watched the mighty, kaleidoscopic vision, awed by its splendor, while Jo, who had seen the same sight so often that she had ceased to view it with enthusiasm, concentrated her attention on the operations of the *mali* in a flower bed.

"Oh, Jo! how can you miss such a sight!" exclaimed Judy. "It is more wonderful than anything—it might be equalled only by the aurora borealis! Where is Larry?—oh, call him! Larry!" her voice sent its sweet cadence towards the bunga-

low, and Larry who was advising John on a matter of finance, came out, at once, to stand beside her and pay his mead of homage to the spectacle.

When the lights faded as though a grey pall were drawn across the heavens, Judy linked her arm within Larry's and they paced the walks together till the hoot of a motor-horn in the road brought them to a halt beside Jo, and all three watched Billy's two-seater turn the bend of the gate and run up the drive; Billy, at the wheel, and his brother beside him.

"Hello!" called Billy in his funny affected voice, put on to cover the tendency to stammer. "I've brought my b-b-b-brother as promised. He's been most anxious to c-call."

They hopped out nimbly and came towards Mrs. Lester, when introductions were made, first to Mrs. Lester, who finished the process.

"How d'you do," said Richard Dallas bowing over Judy's hand with exaggerated politeness. "I am delighted."

"I am very pleased to meet you," said she giving him the full battery of her lovely glance. She was trembling, visibly, but making a valiant effort to control her nerves.

Larry then shook hands and the party moved towards the bungalow.

"He is already struck. Conquer him, Judy," whispered Mrs. Lester in her ear.

Judy was so frightened that she could only cover

her embarrassment by soft looks and coquetry for which Larry had been prepared by Jo, but towards which he refused to be reconciled. To him, Judy was as sacred as if she were already his wife, and to see another man fall into the snare of admiration and then desire, roused distaste and antagonism.

Mercifully, the verandah was already dark with the gloom of approaching night, so that fine shades of expression were lost in faces. By the time lights appeared, a greater self-control was reached.

John's hospitable instincts would not hear of his visitors returning to a late dinner, but would have them stay to potluck; to which they readily agreed, much to Larry's disgust and Jo's impatience. Tony, next, arrived, looking glum and surly, and nothing anyone could say or do could win from him a smile. From the first he loathed Richard Dallas because it was obvious that he was greatly struck by Judy's charm and sweetness.

While Judy played the piano, Richard Dallas hovered about her. When she sang, his eyes devoured her face, and not to be annoyed by his attentions to his beloved girl, Larry consented to play bridge with John and the two boys, leaving the stranger to the ladies in the drawing-room.

Only once during the evening did Judy have a chance to speak to Tony, and that was while Richard Dallas and Jo had a conversation near

the piano. Tony being dummy appeared on the threshold only to be called by Judy and made to give an account of himself.

"You are in a bad temper, Tony," she whispered kindly. "What's the matter?"

"Everything," said he shortly. "I wish you would not be so encouraging to that bounder."

"Why, Tony! What a way to talk! What is wrong with you?"

"What is wrong with *him*, you mean," he growled. "I know of him by reputation. Billy has told me heaps, and there have been rumors, besides, which make me feel that his presence, here, among you ladies, is an insult. If I had a wife, I should refuse to introduce him."

"Why did Billy bring him here?"

"Billy does as he is told. Dick made up his mind to know you and came to Panighat for that purpose."

"What do you mean, Tony?" she asked, feeling her heart stand still, then race furiously.

"Just that. Billy told me that Dick was in love with the description he got of you in his brother's letters. The young idiot has been letting himself go about you—telling that"—he swallowed the swear word, "unscrupulous devil so much, that he has been filled with curiosity and so made an excuse of health to spend Christmas with Billy."

"Who says that *that is* his motive?" fought Judy.

"Billy believes it, and so do I. Billy is mad with him for the way he is carrying on. He did think he would have some consideration for—others."

If she had not been so deeply absorbed in her own anxious problem, Judy would have smiled at his openly expressed jealousy.

"I hate to think of him sitting near you and whispering in your ear, the dirty dog! He's not your sort and too heartily disliked by really nice people in town to be tolerated by the Lesters and you. I'd give anything to see you snub him as he deserves—but you are so sweet and generous—you cannot snub anyone."

(*Dare not*, is what Judy would like to have said.)

"You need not mind, Tony. Larry understands me. It is only surface kindness. Deep down, I can't bear the man."

"I am glad to hear you say that. He isn't fit to touch the hem of your gown."

A feeling of the utmost relief was felt by several of the party when Billy proposed returning. "I have to be up early to-morrow morning for inspection and parade at a distant *thana*.* Come, Dick. Let's be going."

As it was Richard Dallas's first visit, he rose,

* Police Station.

instantly, hoping, politely, that he had not stayed too long.

"If I may, I shall do myself the pleasure of coming again," said he to John.

"Certainly, do!" cried John heartily. "We'll be delighted to see you"; for which Jo gave him a scolding when they were alone.

"John, dear, you haven't any bump of observation! With half an eye it was plain to see how bored we were with him—Judy and I. He has tired us so, that I shan't sleep for nerves, and Judy will be quite ill."

"I didn't know it was like that! I thought Judy was having the time of her life, and what with watching the faces of Larry and Tony, catching Billy revoking every third game, I really had a most exciting evening myself."

"What do you think of Richard Dallas?"

"I don't particularly care for his face. His eyes are too deepset for beauty——"

"I didn't mean his looks."

"The man is a 'dark horse,' if you can understand what that means. He's lived—you can tell it by the lines near his mouth, and I guess he's a terror with women. I didn't care for the way he was studying Judy."

"You saw that?"

"So did Larry! He was aching to get him by the throat." And John laughed.

"And that's the man you have asked to come again!"

"He asked himself. I could not very well tell him that we had had enough of him the first visit. Could I?"

"Ah, well. I hope he'll not stay long!"

II

Christmas came and went quietly for the Lesters and their guests, for neither Larry nor Judy accepted the invitations showered on them by the residents of Panighat for the station festivities. Jo refused, as she had no pretty clothes and could not afford any for festive occasion; and Judy shrank from the possibility of meeting a crowd of strangers collected from the neighboring districts for dancing and tournaments. So, in spite of urgent calls and messages from the two Dallases, the Jamunghur party refused to change their minds.

Christmas morning brought surprises in the way of presents for all. John and Jo had gifts from many of their friends in the neighborhood besides a cheque from Larry. Larry and Judy had presents from both husband and wife. Judy had a Keats from Tony, a wonderful diamond ring from Larry, which, he said, was a token of their engagement; but from Billy and his brother, she had the strangest present of all. They drove round to Jamunghur to present it in person, Billy full of

innocent mirth at the quaintness of the design, Richard, inscrutable and smiling. The others, also, had remembrances from them—Jo, a cake, John, a case of champagne, Larry cigars, Tony a hunting-crop—but Judy's gift was in a silk-lined leather case, with a jeweller's trade-mark inside the cover.

While she unwrapped it with, somewhat, trembling fingers, Richard Dallas looked on, a queer smile playing about his lips, and Billy, full of excitement, could attend to nothing else.

"When you don't know what it means, ask me, and I'll tell you," said he. "Remember it is from us both."

"A symbol with a message," said Richard Dallas.

Judy looked round for Larry before undoing the final wrapper, but he had answered a call from John who was busy superintending the opening of the case of champagne.

"It is very kind of you to give me anything," she said opening the leather case and looking with puzzled eyes down at the beautiful thing on its satin bed. It was a jewelled brooch, shaped strangely.

Judy stared for several seconds at it before she realized that it was designed like a pair of handcuffs in gold and slung on a bejewelled pin.

When she realized the idea, she was suddenly faint and dizzy. There was singing in her ears while the whole room rocked before her. Realizing

that she must not give herself away, to Richard Dallas, of all people, she made a great effort and recovered her self-control.

"Ask me," said Billy childishly, "and I'll tell you the meaning of it! But, by jove! You are not well?"

"I am quite well," said Judy, in a voice she could hardly recognize as her own. "What does it mean?"

(If he had told her: "It means that you are she whom the police are looking for," she would not have been surprised. It was what she was expecting. She was too confused to realize that Billy would scarcely have looked so happy while asking to be questioned).

"It means," said Billy with a grin, "that it is a symbol of what we all are—your *slaves*—handcuffed and bound securely, yours, for ever! Isn't that a brainy idea?"

"Was it yours?" asked Larry quietly. He had returned and was standing behind Judy's chair, looking down at the beautiful trinket in its case.

"No. I don't rise to such heights. It was Dick's inspiration. Let's give her something with a—double—"

"Shut up!" grunted Dick. Then laughing easily, "I saw it sometime ago in a jeweler's window, and as this brother of mine was always so full of his abject slavery to Mrs. Sherman, calling himself her 'prisoner' and slave, I sent for it as a joke."

"It is very kind of you," said Larry, without a smile on his face. "But Judy does not accept expensive presents from her friends. I am afraid you will have to send it back. A book, a calendar, a trifling ornament to mark the season and Day, are welcome—but this is a bit outside the necessities of the occasion."

Richard Dallas shot a look at Judy and saw the color returning to her cheek. "Are you really feeling better? I am glad. I did not think a little emblem of that sort would upset you. Do you wish me to take it back?"

"Please do. Larry is right. I have never received so expensive a present from anyone I do not know intimately." Her refusal was accompanied by a look of such beautiful deprecation, that Richard Dallas appeared appeased. Billy however, was inconsolable.

"I hope you did not th-th-think we meant to be impertinent?" he cried. "Dick and I, together, can afford it quite well. I thought it so quaint, so pretty!"

"It is very pretty," said Judy, scarcely knowing what she said, while a crimson glow burned in her cheeks. "But I don't want people to spend money on me. I hope you will forgive me for returning it."

When they had gone, Larry heard her sobbing bitterly in her room, and stealing in, he spent some time trying to console her.

"Oh, Larry, that man suspects! He did it only to test me, and I, absolutely, gave myself away! Now, he will tell the police, and you and I will be taken!"

"Dearest, don't! It is easy to imagine things that will never take place," he coaxed, holding her to him and kissing her lips. "My sweet Judy! I could have killed him where he stood. Why doesn't he die—people die so suddenly in India. Why not he? I hate him. God, how I hate him!"

For a long time Judy clung to his neck, sobbing, and seeking comfort. "They will part us. They will put us in prison, and I shall never be able to love you any more like this," she cried, again and again.

"Darling, darling!" was all he could say while he caressed her passionately, tenderly. "God will, yet, give us to each other."

III

It was Jo's opinion that it was entirely a coincidence. Why should they jump to the conclusion that he was having a little private experiment of his own as a free-lance detective, a Sherlock Holmes in real life? He and Billy had been rather generous to them all. The champagne was a real treat, and what a wonderful cake! Larry's brand of cigars, too, were the most expensive.

Here Larry announced that he had passed the box on to his bearer.

"What!" shrieked Jo. "Do you know what they would cost at home?"

"They might cost a guinea each for all I care. I want nothing of Dallas senior. Billy is a kid and means nothing. I have no grudge against him, but, one day I'll be level with his precious brother."

Judy shuddered, for she was unable to rid herself of the feeling that it had been no coincidence; that Richard Dallas had meant to take her by surprise, and draw his own conclusions. He had heard something that had made him focus them at Jamunghur with suspicion, and woe betide her if she offended him! She knew that, already, Richard Dallas was greatly attracted—that he would never deny himself the hope of an intrigue by giving the police the cue—unless she so provoked and annoyed him that he was driven, out of revenge, to injure her. So it was her best course to play him as long as she could, just as she would a fish at the end of a line, and hope for the best. A complication threatened through Larry who was growing jealous and reckless, for Dallas was handsome after the Mephistophelian type, and confessedly unscrupulous.

In his visits after Christmas he often let drop his contempt for religion and all moral and social codes. He showed Judy that nothing, and no one, had ever been allowed to stand in the way of his attaining his heart's desire; not even God or the Devil.

"What I want, I take," he once told her, when they were seated in the garden alone. "I am a man, altogether, without scruples of conscience. It is a wonderful freedom!"

"A dreadful slavery, I call it," she said shudderingly.

"How so?"

"Because you have sold yourself to the devil——"

"The devil is, proverbially, supposed to look after his own!"

"Some day, if ever you are very ill, you will look back on all this and wish to recall your blasphemies."

"I am not that sort of coward, believe me," he said, with a defiant laugh. "In the first place, I have no belief in God or the devil. It is only the fool, who, having one life to live, denies himself all that his soul craves because of a cowardly dread of punishment, hereafter. I believe, like old Omar—'Take the cash in hand and waive the rest'! There may never be any 'hereafter'. Who is to prove all those fairy-tales?"

"Don't talk like that! You make my blood run cold!"

"I won't, if that is the result! for I want your blood to glow hotly—" he whispered suddenly in her ear—"*for me.*"

"That could never happen while you disgust me with such defiant, blasphemous talk!"

"What does it matter? We'll agree to differ. What I am most interested in, is, whether you will visit Billy and me? Of course we want everyone—" realizing that she would not go alone. "Come to Panighat for the week-end?"

"Ask Jo—I am quite willing, if she says 'yes'."

"There is a little dance on. Do you realize that I have never seen you in evening dress?"

"What does it matter?"

"It matters to me. I have a passion for women's fashions, and had I not been on the Stock Exchange, I should have liked to design women's dresses. Shall I tell you in what you would look irresistible?"

"Do," said Judy, glad to change the subject.

Dallas proceeded to describe a frock so daring that the color rose to Judy's face and she wanted to show her annoyance by rising and leaving him, but the fear of offending him past forgiveness held her to the spot, disgusted and inwardly raging.

"Your style is peculiarly adapted to the suggestive fashions of modern times, because you have the figure of the Venus of Milo. Do you know," he bent towards her making her heart throb uncomfortably—"if you were mine, I should go mad to create an artistic setting for your beautiful form. I should furnish our rooms—those dedicated to our private use—in black—*velvet*, preferred, because it is so dense. It takes no lights. All the light would be in your transparent flesh—the

beautiful, blue-veined loveliness which I can picture." His breath was hot on her cheek. "I think of it when I am alone—I dream of it—I am planning to attain the fulfilment of this, my glorious dream. Judy!" he whispered, "*Come to me!*"

It was said so low that she pretended not to hear. Where was everyone? Why was Larry absent? If he had been near, this devil incarnate would not have dared to say these things!

"You are so lovely," he went on—"so adorable, that I fear I have gone mad with desire for possession. Let me teach you love as I know it. Let me take you away——"

"Mr. Dallas! I don't think you quite know what you are saying," she returned in frightened tones. She wanted to strike him—but he had the whip-hand.

"I do—every word. I have plenty of money. We can live where and how we please. Think over what I have said, and think of the joy—the life—to which I shall awaken you, sweet, cold, passionless girl!"

Judy sprang to her feet—

She wanted to kill him—but she covered her face with her hands, instead, to shut out his evil presence.

"Leave me!" she cried shaken to the depths with fear and hatred. "Oh, never say such things to me again!"

He laughed softly and pressed a kiss on her arm. "Little startled bird! I promise to be silent for the present. I don't want to scare you away. But I love your reluctance—your shrinking. It is *almost* maidenly! There will be more to fight for, and attainment will be all the more thrilling. A fellow like myself has no use for ripe fruit that falls into the hand at the first touch."

Judy walked away leaving him to pull out a cigarette case and gloat, alone, over his evil dreams.

IV

Since Richard Dallas's arrival, Judy could see herself captured in a net which was slowly being drawn closer about her. She regarded him as a monster more to be dreaded than a tiger, with all the feline instincts of that regal animal and none of its dignity, for he was playing with her in the same way as the feline species do with captured prey.

Tony looked at her reproachfully. He could not understand why she tolerated the attentions of such a man after she had been warned; and he allowed days to pass without paying his accustomed visit to Jamunghur.

Billy, too, began to look unhappy and ashamed. His big brother was not behaving nicely. He was courting trouble, and it surprised him that Larry

was so long-suffering as not to show him plainly that his attentions were unwelcome both to himself and Mrs. Sherman. But Larry went about with John, keeping as much out of Dallas's way as it was possible; and Billy did not know that it was because he was afraid to trust himself in the same room with the designing villian. Larry, too, was beginning to believe that the beast, Richard Dallas, had his paw on his victim, whom he would destroy when it suited his purpose. To precipitate results by losing his temper would not help Judy; therefore he kept aloof while he cudgelled his brains for inspiration how to arrange another flight now that he had no car. He, also, feared that, in attempting to escape, they might not be so lucky, a second time.

CHAPTER X

THE DANGER SIGNAL

ONE night, a few days after Richard Dallas had begun his love-making in the garden, a window creaking disturbingly in the breeze caused Josephine to rise from her bed to silence it. While engaged in wedging it firmly, she caught sight of a figure slowly pacing the lawn in the starlight, and was immediately concerned; for since John was sound asleep, it could be no other than Larry.

This was the reason why he looked so gaunt and tired. He scarcely slept!

Throwing on a wrapper, she ran down to him and linked an arm in his. "Oh, Larry! What is the meaning of this? It is past midnight."

"I can't sleep," he returned impatiently.

"What is it? Anything new?"

"Nothing newer than the annoyance that the cad, Dallas, has brought me, damn him! Do you see how he is pursuing Judy?"

"But everyone admires her. You ought to be getting used to it, by now."

Larry ground his heel into the turf. "If he tries to make love to her, I shall lay him out. I am at

the end of my tether. If the worst comes to the worst I'll shoot him like a dog and then put an end to myself!"

"You're talking wildly, old son. All this is neither here nor there. Let Judy manage him. She has done well, so far. He will have to return to his business in Calcutta, and we will be rid of him."

"You never know what he is trying on. I know his type, and they should be exterminated as vipers."

"He can't do anything if Judy keeps her head and consults you. Go to bed and sleep. You will see that you are exaggerating things badly."

"He suspects us—I feel it. Judy feels it—remember that horrible present he tried to give her at Christmas!"

"A coincidence."

"Never! There was something sinister in it."

"Well—if it is so, you won't help matters by having a break-down. Please go in and rest. Judy needs you."

"Thank you, Jo. It is that thought that keeps me from going clean crazy."

Larry took Jo's advice and went in. Though it was dark, he did not light the table-lamp, but was in the act of removing his dressing-gown, when a light noise reached his ear. Someone was moving near at hand.

He stood still and waited to locate the sound,

and discovered that it was at the door of communication, between his room and Judy's.

Presently the door creaked on its hinges and opened slowly, at the same time shedding the beams of a lighted candle into his room.

Larry stepped instantly behind it and, from his sheltered corner, watched Judy enter the room and look towards the bed. To his surprise, she was fully dressed and hatted, as for a journey, and the hand which held the candle-stick trembled visibly. What he could see of her face in profile showed a sad droop of the mouth.

What was she about? What did it mean?

Seeing that he was not in bed and asleep, she looked round the room with scared eyes, then blowing out the candle turned back, afraid, no doubt, that he might enter suddenly and discover her.

"Judy," he called arrestingly, and, springing forward, caught the hurrying form in his arms. "What is the meaning of this?"

For answer, she burst into passionate tears.

"You are dressed for travelling!" he cried, fear tugging at his heart. Was she about to run away with Dallas?—God! The idea struck a chill to his heart.

After a great deal of patient questioning, Larry learned that she was actually about to run away, *alone*—not with anyone—but *alone*!

"I was going to Tony's," she sobbed. "I was going to beg him to take me to the nearest railway

station by the river. He has a boat in which we could travel, and I thought I would go to Calcutta under another name and earn my living as a governess or something till I got a post as stewardess on a ship going home," she confessed, disjointedly.

"You were deserting me? You are plunging a dagger in my heart. Oh Judy!"

"I was doing it to save you. I thought of leaving a note explaining what I had done and asking you to try to get home, too, another way. We cannot go on as we are. Richard Dallas is getting too much for me."

"The cursed scoundrel."

"One day I shall quarrel with him, and then, I am sure he will not spare me."

Larry strained her to him. "To think that you nearly left me! How could you have been so cruel? Judy, swear you will never do this again. Let us stick it out together. In Calcutta, without money, without friends, you would have been suspected at once, and all our efforts to escape would be rendered futile. Have you forgotten that I am thinking and planning for us both?"

"But you know that man! He terrifies me."

"If I could only kill him!"

"That would ruin everything. Oh, Larry, we must go away again where he cannot find us. He will be a bad enemy, but I cannot bear him as a lover!"

"Judy! God forbid that you should yield to

him! If you were ever persuaded by him to give me up—even permitted his damnable love-making —I shall want to shoot him."

Judy shuddered violently. "Shoot me too!"

"Judy, you speak as though such a thing as accepting his proposals were possible."

"If they carry an ultimatum?" she asked shudderingly. For that was what she saw as inevitable, soon.

"Tell me, and let me deal with him—promise."

But Judy would not promise. "I am thinking of you, Larry, more than of myself."

"If the worst comes to the worst, it would be better, my own, to stand on one's trial than yield a jot to that monster of sensuality and lust."

"But they would imprison you," she wailed. "And it will be all because of me. I shall never forgive myself for letting you mix yourself up with my wretched affairs."

And so they argued till Larry persuaded Judy to go to bed and rest, and exacted her promise never to think of such a wild act, again, as flight, *alone*. Whatever happened, they must stand or fall together.

II

To pacify Dallas, the week-end was spent at Panighat. Jo renovated an old evening frock with the help of Judy, and consented to attend a club

dance. Even John, bursting at the seams of an old dress-suit, betook himself to the house of entertainment and stood about in doorways, serene and unashamed, talking to old friends and making new ones. Jo envied his complete immunity from anxieties such as she, Larry, and Judy were enduring, for he knew nothing of the cause, and to him the world was happy and kind.

They all put up at Billy's bungalow which was stretched to its furthest capacity to accommodate so many. Jo having insisted upon sharing Judy's room, made it possible for Tony, also, to be given space, and the week-end did not prove as alarming as it had threatened, in perspective.

From the first, however, it was plain, even to outsiders who were at all observant, that Dallas, senior, had but one idea in his head, and that was to seduce Judy from her allegiance to her "husband." He was so completely infatuated, that he allowed himself to become thoroughly unpopular in the station while he courted Judy, at the expense of all social obligations. When he entertained guests at dinner, at Billy's bungalow, it was always Judy whom he placed beside himself, no matter who had the seat of honor, and Larry had to be restrained by Jo, with the utmost difficulty, from insulting his host and creating a scene. However, nothing terrible happened, and the party returned to Jamunghur; Jo with a sigh of relief, Judy on the verge of nervous collapse, Larry suffering

from impotent rage, because his hands were tied.

Tony had spent an equally miserable week-end, for his idol was behaving inexplicably. He could only question her with his eyes, for in very shame at not being able to explain her apparent flirtation with Dallas, she gave him no chance to speak to her alone, and had no dances to give him when they were guests at the club. Though it hurt her to think that he was placing her in the category of married flirts and lowering his estimate of her, she had nothing to say to him in her defense without telling him all, so she was cruel in her enforced neglect and avoidance of him.

Larry saw it all, and began to have a fellow-feeling for Tony. To make up in a measure for Judy's slights he was specially kind and companionable to the boy, going out of his way to cheer him by showing a contempt he did not feel for Dallas's attentions to his "wife."

He rode over to Tony's factory the day after their return from Panighat, to look him up and arrange a morning's snipe-shooting; and hearing that the Sahib was keeping his room to the neglect of his work, went to him, unannounced.

He was always glad he had acted on that instinct of sympathy and understanding and had called when he did, for he was only just in time to strike the barrel of a revolver into the air, which Tony was placing at his temple.

It discharged itself into the ceiling and the two men faced each other grimly.

"What the hell did you do that for?" asked Tony when he could command his lips to articulate the words.

"Tony—you are mad and will have to be locked up if you are going to try any such tricks again," said Larry.

"What is it to you what I do?"

"It is so much to me that I cannot, even now, think of what might have happened if I had been a second too late. Tony, old fellow, what is it?" he asked, placing an arm round his shoulders; and Tony broke down completely, sobbing like a child into his hands.

"Did you want to do it because of—Judy?" Larry asked with the tenderness of a woman. "Don't mind me, but speak up, dear lad."

Tony nodded. "I don't care who knows, but I worship her! I have thought of her as above all failings—so pure—so wonderful—and now—!"

"You are disappointed?—you feel that she has gone down—down—to the level of women you see carrying on with men behind their husband's backs?"

Tony's silence gave assurance that Larry had stated the truth.

"You are all wrong, old man. Judy is everything that is lovely and good, only—there are reasons for her conduct which she, alone, can tell

you. I haven't the liberty. Perhaps she'll feel, as I do, that you ought to know. Anyhow, don't doubt her. You see, I don't. I believe in Judy as I believe in God."

"Most husbands do, in the wife they love!" burst from Tony with bitter cynicism.

"I know—which places me in a ridiculous light, for the moment. Well—take it from me that Judy is all right. It is Dallas who is a low blackguard. He is an unspeakable cad. One day—" Larry's tone grew gravely menacing, "I shall settle accounts with him for this—I'll avenge both Judy and myself on his loathesome carcase."

Larry did not leave Tony till he was in better spirits and had given him his word of honor that he would not make another attempt to take his own life again. "I ask you to promise mainly for Judy's sake. If ever you did such a thing, it would be a blow aimed at her tender heart, Tony!"

"What does she care!" Tony choked.

"She's fond of you, Tony!"

"If I could believe it!"

"I know it. If it were not for the fact that I am sure of Judy's love, I could have been jealous of that affection. But Judy is everything you have thought her—loyal and true. Be a good pal to her, Tony, and don't deal her a cowardly blow."

It was enough. After that he was convinced it was safe to leave Tony and return; but he told Judy of his experience of the morning and, after

a long consultation, it was decided to let Tony into the secret.

"I feel that he would help us in any difficulty," said she. "And I know he would die sooner than betray us."

III

So, the next afternoon, when Tony called, he found to his surprise that he was received by Judy alone under the shade of a group of *kalajamun* trees at the foot of the garden, where the grounds overlooked the river. Judy explained that she was the only idle one that afternoon. John had taken Larry snipe-shooting on a neighboring morass, and Jo was visiting a patient in the village. (It appeared that the villagers on John's estate preferred Jo's treatment in sickness to that of the civil surgeon or his assistant, a native, at Panighat.)

Judy sat in a cane chair with a book in her lap, enjoying the fresh, northerly breeze and the grateful shade, and Tony threw himself on the grass at her feet.

"It was wonderful to find you alone!" he sighed adoringly.

"Make the most of it, Tony! I don't know when and at what moment my enemy might be upon me!" she said with a pathetic softening of her eyes.

For answer Tony dropped a kiss on the point of her foot. "I have been in hell," he said emotionally.

"Poor Tony!—you thought Judy a vampire! You believed she was encouraging a bad man to love her and—responding to his beastliness?"

"Oh, Judy!" Tony's face was hidden in her lap.

"Listen, Tony!" she said, running her fingers affectionately through his hair. "Larry told me—what happened—at your bungalow yesterday. Oh, how wicked! You would have killed me, Tony! Do you think I would not have felt such a thing to the end of my days? You know I am very fond of you—not in the same way as I love Larry, but—there are different sorts of love, and mine for you is like a—a sister's.

"I felt you were misunderstanding me!—but I could not explain. I was afraid to tell you all—about myself—for I wondered if you would understand? or if you would think I was lying? so I preferred to let you think bad things of me in your heart, fearing the worst, if you knew all. But I have so few real friends, that I am going to test you, Tony. I am going to tell you everything, so that you can judge me. I believe you will make no mistake . . . like Jo . . . like Larry, himself. Dear, faithful Larry.

"Now—to begin with—I am not married, Tony. Larry and I are not husband and wife."

Tony's face as it was lifted on hearing this astounding piece of news was a study. "Not married?" The mixture of emotions fighting for

ascendancy hinted at the chaos she had made of his mind.

"No. Jo knows—we have separate rooms—" she colored deeply. "But it was the only way we could escape pursuit. We had to pass as husband and wife. You see, Sherman is not really Larry's name. It is *Straughan*. And I—I am Judith Kennedy!"

"WHAT?" Tony whispered tragically.

"Yes, *Judith Kennedy*, who is wanted by the police on the suspicion of having killed her husband, Hubert Kennedy, on their honeymoon."

As Tony continued to devour her face with his astonished eyes, she went on, speaking naturally. It was stale ground—she was too well used to the facts to falter and grow hysterical, and was able to give him a *resumé* of her life from the time she met Hubert Kennedy to the present.

It took a long time in telling—this tragic story of her marriage, and Tony refrained from interrupting her. He was silent even when she finished, his eyes mesmerized and staring.

"So, Tony," she said despairingly, "that is how the case stands. I made the mistake of running away from Calcutta. I did not know I was running away from the police, because I did not know that Hubert was killed. I thought I was running away from a drunken husband, and wanted to go back home—feeling that I could trust Larry to take me. But the tragedy of it was that he believed, at first, that I had done the deed in self-defense. He had

heard that Hubert was killed; I had not. So he brought me away here to hide me from the police, and save me from arrest. It was only by accident I found out about Hubert—and then it was too late to communicate with the police. Who would believe me guiltless? my very disappearance had gone against me! So here we are, hoping to find a way of leaving the country—unable to marry for fear that our appearance at a registry office will give us away—wearing our hearts out with anxiety and suspense, and never knowing what a day might bring forth! On the top of all this, comes Billy's brother who is, by repute, an amateur detective, professedly interested in the Kennedy mystery. He has said no word of it—but Billy let drop as much, and I feel that he is not here for nothing. He has heard something—possibly through Billy,—which has aroused his suspicions. I think he would have ferreted out everything by now, had he not grown suddenly interested in me, personally, and begun to imagine that I can be won into yielding to—his wishes."

Even then, Tony was not prepared with words. It seemed that his mind was stunned and that he was still groping to follow the meaning of her story. Twice he opened his lips to speak and closed them again, swallowing hard, his eyes burning into hers.

"He drops hints—only hints. He gave me a brooch at Christmas—the design was handcuffs! —and he must have read in my face the mortal

shock it was to open that silk-lined case and see its contents. I returned it, but he was not offended, for he had had his fun—I had given myself away! Oh, Tony! He has flung a net round me and every day draws it closer! I don't know what to do!" Her voice broke and she, at last, wept, silently, despairingly.

That seemed to rouse Tony from his trance, and he fell to kissing her gown, the frill on her arm, the hands covering her face.

"Forgive me!" he cried at length—"I can only think of you as free! I forget that I haven't an 'earthly' beside Larry, but at any rate, I can speak —I can tell you how much I love you—I love you! —poor martyr!—To think how they have persecuted you! I would give my life to save you from all the anxiety and suspense, the uncertainty, the alarms! I'll kill that brute for daring to insult you!"——

"Oh, hush!" said Judy. "You must keep my secret—you must not interfere between me and Mr. Dallas. I only told you, that you might not misjudge me—not to make you act as my champion! Larry is that, and even he knows that, for the present, we have to go warily. Mr. Dallas may have it in his power to bring immediate disaster on me—and Larry too. I am thinking of Larry a great deal, for he will be sent to jail for hiding me! Poor darling!"

After some time she succeeded in convincing

Tony of the need to shut his eyes to anything he resented, or which roused his just wrath. He was to remember that Larry was there and had the first right to act.

Soon afterwards, Jo returned, and the two Dallases arriving in Billy's car for tennis; the afternoon passed, as usual, with games till it was dusk, when John and Larry returned from their "shoot," with a *shikari* in attendance carrying the birds they had "bagged."

IV

While they rested in the dusk of evening, refreshing their energies with cool drinks and talking of the "shoot," Dallas taking the opportunity of the distraction to whisper subtleties in Judy's ear, excited voices were heard approaching, and in a few minutes, a *chaukidar* and some of John's peons came hurriedly to the foot of the steps calling aloud—"Sahib! Sahib! a strange thing has happened!"

All spoke at once, so that it was impossible to arrive at what they wished to say till John took charge of the situation and quieted the confusion. At length one of the estate servants held forth with authority—

"This morning a fisherman in the lower district was rowing not far from Chunamuthi ferry and met with an obstruction close under the water. He gave information to others of Chunamuthi

busti who came running. Strong swimmers dived about the spot, and they tell that it is a large conveyance in good preservation. They say it is a motorcar, submerged. How it came there, is a mystery—and who lost it without making complaint! The police have been informed and they are making arrangements to lift it out, but that will take many days."

All who understood the language showed such acute surprise, that John translated, in brief, for Larry and Judy's benefit.

"A fisherman has found a large car sunk in the river in the next district, some fifty miles from here, and the police are arranging to pull it out. The river has fallen rather lower than usual, this season, and, consequently, the discovery has been made, otherwise it might have remained there indefinitely. I wonder how the deuce it got there? I don't remember hearing of any accident recently —or even so near by! Have you?" he asked Jo, who was looking vacantly at the kerosene lamp a servant was lighting.

"No," she said feebly, afraid to meet Larry's eyes, as the flame shot up and banished the darkness from the verandah.

"A motor-car did you say?" asked Dallas, who had paid little attention. "What's it doing in the river?"

"That's what I want to know," said John.

"I'm sorry it won't be my job," said Billy, "for it's going to be rather interesting to discover who

owned it and why he didn't make a devil of a fuss."

"——Fuss to recover it, you mean," said his brother unsympathetically. "That's going to be the crux of the whole mystery. He didn't, because he evidently wanted to lose it. By jove!—that's some loss. A car!"

"Some motive, too, at the back of it! I *shouldn't* be at all surprised if it belonged to that fellow who eloped with th-th-the b-b-b-b, *damn*! I can't talk," cursed Billy, who always found it most difficult to articulate when excited.

"You mean, who eloped with the bride of the Kennedy case?" said John imperturbably, and Tony noticed how Dallas watched his frank, unconscious face.

"Yes, that naturally suggests itself."

"It does," said Dallas, "and I have no doubt that the police will soon score a point over it."

Larry and Judy were, for the moment, stricken dumb. The former, however, was the first to recover.

"You people in the *mafasil* seem to get quite exciting times, occasionally." In his heart he was cursing himself for his folly in dropping it into the Ganges before learning all about the vagaries of that erratic river. Who was to dream that it could fall so rapidly and so low?

Judy, in whom he had confided concerning his disposal of the car, was voiceless while her ears hummed and her heart turned to lead in her breast.

She came to life again when Dallas whispered in her ear:

"Mr. Lester insists on our staying the night and I have accepted his invitation. Will you come for a stroll before we tidy for dinner?"

"I—I don't think I feel quite up to walking," said Judy whose knees trembled and felt weak.

"Don't let *anything* worry you," he said lower still, and meaningly. "The matter of the car will take long to clear up. Besides, why should anyone connect it with *you*?"

"Why should you think I am worrying? It is nothing whatever to me," she said coldly, yet the tremor in her voice was self-betraying.

"I have something to say to you in the garden," he replied doggedly. "Make an effort and come with me—we can sit on the bench by the river."

Was there any chance to refuse when he took that tone? Judy rose and accompanied him into the garden, and as she left her seat, was forced to steady herself by holding objects she passed on her way to the steps.

"We are only taking a little stroll," Dallas explained, "and will remember not to delay dinner."

"We don't dine till eight and it's only seven," said John hospitably.

And Jo dared not speak her mind to John when the couple passed beyond earshot, for Billy was there stammering his theories concerning the sunk motor-car into Tony's deaf ears.

CHAPTER XI

JUDY'S RESOLUTION

"I HAVE a great horror of snakes," said Judy, when she and Dallas were seated on the bench at the end of a walk, looking down on the river flowing peacefully below. "Don't you think it a little foolhardy to sit out here when it is so dark?"

"I dare say it is, but if I rap, occasionally, with my stick, it will make it perfectly safe for us. You see I have taken the precautions to bring mine with me," said Dallas. "I had to get you away, for I can rarely have you to myself, and it is driving me crazy. I want to put a question to you which must have a sincere, truthful reply. A good deal depends on it, though it will make very little difference to results—it is only that you might prefer things that way. It is this: You are not Larry *Straughan's* wife?"

Judy could have shrieked at the suddenness with which he revealed his knowledge of her identity. Seeing that it was useless to fence with such a man, she murmured that she was not.

"I guess that you could not have found the opportunity to tie the knot," he replied grimly.

"That gives me the chance to offer you marriage, though as far as I am concerned, it wouldn't matter a tintack if there were any ceremony or not. I want you and will have you. You have no love for me, but that is a trifle. What is love? What we call love becomes a habit with women. If I treat you well, give you plenty to wear, I guess you will find it will suit you to be responsive and affectionate towards me. The truth is, I am mad for you. I will tell you, if you are keen, to know how I began to suspect the truth about you, shall I?"

"If it doesn't take too long," she answered despairingly. It seemed that her heart was suddenly dead within her. All her hopes of love and happiness had vanished. Larry, also, had receded into the dim distance of things that, henceforth, could have no meaning for her.

"Before I came to Panighat I had been hearing from Billy of you. He raved so much that I became curious to see this divinity. Then—one thing he said in his letter decided me and put me right on the track. He said that Mrs. Lester's brother called himself *Sherman*, which struck him as strange, when he had only lately been reading a book from her shelf which had on the flyleaf: 'Josephine *Straughan*.' He thought it odd, unless he was a stepbrother, but, as it was no business of his, he had left the matter alone. Billy did not know at the time that the police had discovered through the taxi-driver that Larrimore Straughan

was responsible for the disappearance of the 'bride'; and though he has known it since, he is too ingenuous and trusting to connect such a fact with Larry and you. Some other Straughan, no doubt, is the fellow. At all events, he would not dream of associating *you* with a case like that! But he gave me the cue which I have followed up very carefully. I have even discovered through a clerk at Messers. Gilmore and Brady, agents and bankers, who are Straughan's agents, that letters directed to Straughan, care of the firm, are put into an envelope and redirected to 'L. Sherman, Esquire,' at Jamunghur. So that's that. The discovery of the car in the river explains to my satisfaction what became of the big Daimler he bought at the hotel and used for his flight with you. It comes to this: I could, if I wished, open my lips and have the two of you arrested to-morrow and thrown into jail pending the trial, and it will go hard with you."

"But—Mr. Dallas! I never killed Hubert Kennedy," she cried in passionate earnestness.

"I don't for a moment believe you did. If I did, it would make no difference to my feeling for you, but I do not. This hand—" he took her right hand in his,—"is incapable of such a deed. Your tender nature would shrink even from the contemplation of it."

"Oh, I do thank you for saying that!" she cried with a sob.

"All the same, it would scarcely matter what I

thought about it. You will be charged, and will have to show that the charge is false. They say by our law a man is innocent till he is proved guilty; it seems to me, however, more the other way, for unless you can prove you are innocent, the prosecution will make it so clear to the jury that you are the guilty one, that they will bring in a verdict against you, and no mistake about it. The judge, then, has his duty to do, and you know what that is?"

"Oh, my God!" Judy could see it all—the crowded court; the prosecuting counsel, who is, more often, the *perse*cuting counsel; the judge in his robes placing the black cap on his head.

"And it won't only be you. I happen to know that Larrimore Straughan will be charged with you, conjointly, as it is believed that it was his hand, not yours, that struck the blow, *but at your instigation.* Men do these things for women they love. It will be both of you in the dock—the same verdict for both."

"Oh!" moaned Judy. "How terrible, when he is innocent!"

"Is he innocent!" exclaimed Dallas, sceptically. "Ha!" he gibed with venom, prompted by the bitterness of jealousy since he knew she loved Larry devotedly, and, no doubt, believed she was living at Jamunghur as his mistress, "There is not a citizen in the town—in the country for that matter, who will give him the benefit of a doubt. But they will

pity him, possibly, and blame you, as they blame women who, by their beauty, lead men to their ruin."

"You are wrong! How dare you say that of Larry! Listen, and I will tell you what happened!" And she forced him to hear the details of that fateful night. She spoke angrily, convincingly, and he made no comment, satisfied to let her talk while he fondled her hand. Again and again she would have snatched it from him—but prudence cautioned her not to annoy him—he was capable of doing both herself and Larry the greatest harm. She, somehow, forgot herself in her fears for Larry whom she had unwittingly drawn into danger of the gallows.

"I found him in the garden," she concluded. "He had been watching and waiting for me! I had believed he had returned to his hotel—but he had kept the taxi in the road and was waiting, sure that I would need him, because Hubert was drunk, and drunkards cannot be trusted. That's all. How dare they drag him into it? Someone I know nothing of, who struck that blow as Hubert fell at my feet, or came in, after I had gone, and did it—I don't know. All I know, is, that Larry was waiting in the garden."

"Got there before you, after doing the deed—that is, if what you say of that night is true. What does it matter to me? I am not judging you—nor would I blame you if you had done it with your

own hand. What I want you to appreciate is, that you are both at this moment in the hollow of my hand, and I have one condition to make for my silence. And that is—*yourself*."

Judy moaned, burying her face in her hands. Was ever the girl in so frightful a trap!

Suddenly she turned to him with melting sweetness, pleading with him, trying to rouse in him a better, more generous feeling. She and Larry were both innocent!—before God, they were innocent! Would he pity her? be merciful to her? for the love of Jesus, spare her?—She would be so grateful —she would remember him with kindness all her life; she would——

All she could say was as vapor before a furnace. Dallas caught her to him and roughly kissed her lips. Again, and again, he pressed his mouth on hers, whispering of his demands. He had manoeuvred the invitation to stay the night, because he meant to have Judy come out to join him in the garden. He had learned that Larry slept in the dressing-room—so she could very well do so without a soul being aware—et cetera——

Judy all but swooned. The sound of the dinner gong brought Dallas to a sense of time and he half-supported her to the house.

"Pull yourself together, girl," he dictated, "or you will be giving the show away. You know what I wish done—*One o'clock at that very spot*—I'll be there."

Judy commanded herself to walk without assistance when in sight of the verandah; and on her way to her room, heard Dallas apologizing for having lost sight of the time—the air had been so pleasant, the stars so bright—he had been trying to improve Mrs. Sherman's knowledge of astronomy——

Judy heard no more as the door closed behind her. Should she tell Larry?—or Tony? They could save her from him!—But how? Only by killing him could they save the situation. If she denied him, he would be the ruin of Larry—for herself she had ceased to care. Even if they hanged her, what did it matter? But Larry! Could she endure that he should be hanged—and all for her? When by bitter self-sacrifice—even life-long shame she could save him?

"Oh, God help me!" She knelt and prayed for deliverance. God, alone, could save her! God, alone, had the power to frustrate her enemies.

II

The night was cool, the darkness intense; stars made a brilliant canopy overhead while all the world was seemingly steeped in slumber. The silence of lonely places can be felt in the soft stir of leaves as the night wind breathes ghost-wise through the trees; or it is felt in the chirp of crickets in the grass, or the hoarse croak of the bull-

frog calling for rain. To all these sounds in the silence, Judy listened while counting the minutes which should lead her to her doom. For she had made up her mind not to go to Dallas, but to destroy herself. She had thought it all out and come to the conclusion that it was the only way to escape the horror that threatened to engulf herself and Larry.

Dallas would be on the bench by the river at one o'clock in the night, listening for her footstep —the cruel coward! the selfish monster! But he would wait in vain!

She could picture him waiting, restless and impatient, wondering, at first, why she delayed—then cursing her for daring to disappoint him; only to discover, when morning rose and the house prepared for breakfast, that he had hounded her to her death.

Judy could also picture the scene when Larry should discover what had happened!—The silence in her room rousing his suspicion, he would call aloud to her, and getting no reply, would appeal to Jo to find out what had happened. Or he would go in himself, being too anxious to wait. Yes. She believed he would go in—and——

She fell to weeping for Larry at the thought of his shock and grief. How terribly he would grieve!

She had written a pathetic letter to Judy which would have to be made public, for it would absolve Larry from all blame in the Kennedy case. In it,

she had confessed herself guilty of the crime, explaining how, after she had done it in self-defense, she had run away and found Larry in the garden ready to help her in her need. Believing her in danger from her drunken husband, he had spent the night in the garden so as to be on hand if wanted. The world would readily accept the story and so clear Larry from suspicion. The letter now stood beside the kerosene lamp on the bedside table.

All that was left for her to do was to steal to Jo's medicine shelf in the sewing-room, when all were asleep, and drink a quantity of poison from one of the few bottles having red labels on them, warning people that the contents were NOT TO BE TAKEN; after which she would return to die in her room.

If Larry only knew! She had already peeped and seen him asleep in the gloom of the starlight, and her heart had melted with love for him and gratitude for all he had done for her. Would he believe her confession and love her still? Whatever happened, he would be safe—and that was all that really mattered.

In the eyes of the world she would go down to posterity as a wicked murderess who heartlessly slew her husband instead of reclaiming him, as it was the duty of a good wife to do. They would embellish the story and say she seized the opportunity when he was helpless and killed him, so that she might be happy with her lover. She had hoped

to escape the consequences of her crimes, but finding escape impossible, had taken her own life.

Judy strove to calm her nerves and think of all else she must do to safeguard Larry.

But she could think of nothing—only the last act in the drama. She would have to be very quiet, or Jo might hear, come out, and find her at the medicine shelf. What would she think?

Judy lay shivering in bed hearing the clock ticking steadily. It would go on ticking like that after she was dead. In the light of her great dread of Dallas, Death seemed a haven of rest and peace. It was only for Larry she suffered. How desperately it would grieve him!

Tony, too, dear fellow, would be broken-hearted. He would not know what to think, believing she had been temporarily insane from fear and persecution. Judy hoped that he and Larry would be wise enough not to seek to punish Dallas, whom she had foiled—setting his devilish designs at naught! It was worth dying to feel that, at least, she had foiled Dallas!

At ten minutes to one her heart beat so violently that she could scarcely breathe. She was threatened with faintness and feared she would not be able to carry out her determination.

As she sat up in bed she felt sick and giddy. How was she going to crawl to the sewing-room for what she wanted?

She tried hard to control her physical weakness

which was the result of anxiety, suspense, and overstrained nerves.

The watch on her wrist showed five minutes to the fateful hour.

Panic spread within her and she rose to her feet. Larry must be saved! He had shielded her from so much, she must now shield him——

She essayed to walk, but the ground heaved under her feet like a ship at sea. Flinging out her arms to save herself from falling, she struck the kerosene lamp sweeping it on to the bed, and then fell unconscious to the floor.

Meantime the bedclothes, saturated in kerosene oil, burst into flames. Tongues of fire leapt ceilingwards; and, as everything was as dry as tinder, in a moment the room was a blazing furnace.

III

Before Jo retired that night, she called Larry into her dressing-room for a consultation, to which John was also admitted.

It was high time that John should be acquainted with the fact that he was standing on a mine which might at any time explode beneath his feet. But it was not easy to tell him of the deceit which had been practised on him by his wife and brother-in-law; nor to prove to him Judy's innocence of the crime for which she was wanted by the police. However, Jo nerved herself to the task and, with

Larry to support her, made John listen to the whole story, and, in the end, accept her point of view without question. Jo said Judy was innocent and so persecuted that Larry was committed to save her if possible or perish with her in the attempt. John had been kept in the dark out of consideration for his feelings and in the hope that a way would soon be found for Larry and Judy to slip out of the country. But, since the discovery of the car in the river, they were all in a fix. John must therefore, forgive the deception and help to decide what was best to be done to save his wife's brother and Judy from being caught at Jamunghur like rats in a trap, and thus prove himself the best husband living.

John said he could forgive everything but Larry's passing Judy off as his wife. That was "A dam' insult" to his sister and the limit of indiscretion! Who would believe in the innocence of the relationship once the circumstances were known? In fact, he was not quite sure that *he* was prepared to believe——

At this, Larry looked so like knocking him down, that he was convinced against his worldly-wise judgment. "Not that I trust Larry—he's not an Irishman for nothing," said he, "hot-headed and romantic. But Judy's good—there is no mistake about Judy! She'd live right, I'd go bail. But what a pair of fools! So you put your car in the river leaving me to think it was sold?"

"I have been driven into one lie after another,"

said Larry unhappily. "It has been a nightmare —is a nightmare still."

"Well, that has fixed the lid on it. It won't be difficult to trace the owner once it's out of the water and in the hands of the police. What are you two going to do, now?"

That was just what they wanted him to suggest.

"We are all going to get into trouble over this," said John. "But, I suppose, we'll have to risk it. Why shouldn't you both be drowned?"

"John!" from Jo in shocked accents.

"Wait a bit," said Larry. "John has an inspiration."

"Larry could take Judy for a sail—and not return. Later on, after the Ganges has been searched for miles down the river, the boat will be discovered bottom upwards against a sandbank in mid-stream. The inference will be plain. Newspaper accounts will publish the sad affair. Jo will receive letters of condolence. Meanwhile, Larry and Judy will have hired a country boat and have dropped down the Ganges to some railway station somewhere—details to be discussed later, and will have found inconspicuous lodgings in Calcutta. Faked passports—Tony and I can manage that through friends in town who need not know we are related, and there you are!"

"By jove!" gasped Larry. "You have a brain, John!"

"I always said he had imagination enough to be

a novelist. It's worth thinking over, this plan of yours, John dear. In the meantime, we'll go to bed as it is getting late." Thus Jo, who disliked late hours.

Larry was glad of the suggestion, for he was weary in body and soul, and the conspirators parted wishing each other good night.

IV

Larry had fallen into a deep sleep of fatigue when the sound of a fall woke him and brought him upright beside his bed, waiting in suspense for something to indicate where the sound had come from. All was still in Judy's room, till—

What was it? There was a smell of smoke. . . .

Listening intently he could hear a rushing sound —like wind—yet there was no wind! There was also crackling. He ran to the door between the rooms which, though never bolted, was closed, and as he drew it open, smoke blew in his face. At the same time, he saw flames above the *pardar* hanging from rings in the doorway. The room was on fire!

Without the loss of a second he dashed into the room only to find the entire bed alight, a column of fire leaping upwards—the ceiling cloth ablaze.

"Help!" he shouted, "fire!"

His eyes caught sight of Judy's form unconscious on the floor, and snatching it, in time, from licking tongues of flame, he ran with her out into the air, calling aloud for help.

Footsteps sounded, and John arrived with Jo close on his heels.

"Good God!—fire?" cried John sniffing the air.

"The house is on fire!" repeated Jo wringing her hands. "Thank God we are insured!" was her afterthought.

"Where is it?"

"In Judy's room," called Larry as he laid Judy on the lawn and tried to revive her.

Billy next appeared in pajamas.

"What's happened? where is it?" He was answered by a roar overhead as the flames spread through the house in the thatch, which was dry and inflammable.

"*Koi hai*!" yelled John to the servants who had been aroused by Larry's shouts of "help! fire!" and were running to render assistance. There were no such things as fire engines in the district, and no means of pumping water from the river without sufficient labor for the operation, so the house was doomed and all that could be done was to salvage what was possible of personal goods. Larry left Judy with Jo and returning to her room dragged out, with great difficulty, the contents of a wardrobe which had held her dresses, and all he could lay his hands on of trunks and drawers, and flung them with what he could of his own on the gravel outside. With the help of the servants John was doing the same on his side of the house. Billy rescued his clothes and proceeded to dress in the

stables. Dallas appeared fully dressed from the river bank where he said he had been enjoying a cigar, and looked on at the activities of others.

"I shouldn't advise you to keep on at that game," he told John who was running in and out of the smoke with arms full of his possessions, "the roof will fall in presently and you will be killed." So great was his care of himself that he stood far from all possibility of being inconvenienced, advising Jo to do the same with Judy who had recovered and was seated shivering on the grass. She, too, was fully dressed, which did not escape his notice, for afterwards he asked her to tell him if she would have come out to him had the house not taken fire.

And Judy allowed him to think that she would.

A great revulsion of feeling was on her and she shuddered to think that she had so nearly taken her own life. "While there was life there was hope," and she would surely find some other way of cheating Dallas of his bargain. She would continue to temporize and keep him waiting till Larry found a way out. Clever women knew how to manage men—why should she despair of keeping Richard Dallas at bay for a while till something could be done!

CHAPTER XII

THE NET

JO had many invitations to stay with neighbors after it was known that she was burnt out of house and home; Larry and Judy were pressed by Tony whose bungalow was a small one, to stay with him. The Dallases insisted on offering hospitality to the ladies only, for they presumed that John would have too much to do arranging for the rebuilding of his bungalow and would require Larry's advice and help. For the time being they were all in tents.

When Jo persisted in refusing, he grew nasty and let Judy understand that he expected her to influence Jo to reconsider her refusal. "If you stay with Tony Long I shall not be able to see you for, God knows, how long unless you chuck everything and come away with me."

Judy shivered, quaking inwardly.

"Personally, I would rather have you stay at Panighat, for my plans are not yet fixed for leaving the country," said Dallas. "It would be rather awkward if we were hauled back from Australia,

for instance, for you to be a witness in the Kennedy case. Much better to be on the spot."

"What do you mean? Why a *witness*?"

"When the murderer is tried."

"Who do you mean?" she asked with beating heart.

"Why, Straughan, of course. It is inevitable, when the facts are known. I can fight for you and get you off—but nothing in the world will save him. They expect to pull the car out of the water in a few days, and—he'll not long be a free man—"

"Then they may just as well take me, too."

"I have told you that I can save you. But you'll have to be called as a witness."

"I don't want to be saved if they take Larry!"

"Come to me at Panighat," he tempted her, "and I can, even, save Larry. I can put the police on a wrong scent—but, only if it will bring you all the sooner and lovingly to my arms."

It was then that Judy began to feel the futility of trying to fight such an unscrupulous blackmailer. In order to save Larry she would have to sell herself. Oh, the wicked cruelty of it!

Dallas continued speaking, his lips close to her ear. As they were alone on the river bank with none to watch his manner and expression, he gave rein to his instinct for cruelty. His eyes grew hard and narrow, his lips drew back on his teeth—he was like a tiger in sight of his quarry and about to spring.

"I told you once before that what I want I take. I seldom accept rejection. By fair means or foul I mean to get you, Judy. If it makes you hate me, still I shall make you mine. But it will be worth your while to try loving me, instead. I can be very generous to one who is generous to me. Come to me, and if it will make you happy, we'll be married at a registry office. Trust me to manage the matter of identification. Even a registrar is human, and a bribe, if sufficiently heavy, will secure his silence. So get your Josephine to bring you as my guest to Panighat. I have arranged that your room shall be next to mine. If you fail me and blow hot and cold, I'll be done with it—I'll—I'll throw you and your lover to the wolves."

"I will speak to Jo. But I can't make her do anything she is determined not to do," said Judy despairingly.

"I leave that to you. Sometimes you drive me mad, Judy. You are so lovely—so desirable!" He took her roughly in his arms and kissed her with hateful passion, bruising her lips in his violence, and she was powerless to repulse him.

II

"Jo, I am afraid we'll have to go to Panighat," said Judy finding a seat in Jo's tent and collapsing on it from sheer nervous prostration. "It means temporizing with Richard Dallas who will not be denied."

"What will that give him? You won't be any nearer granting him favors than you are here!"

"He has hopes," she sighed. "Anyhow, he is getting nasty about it, and considering all that depends on him, I am afraid I must go."

"Have you realized that, opportunity favoring him, he will not respect you!"

"I suppose not! But he offers to marry me."

"That proves his determination! Poor Larry! Will you consent?"

"I may have to, for Larry's sake." Judy then explained all Dallas had told her that threatened Larry, and Jo was petrified with fear.

"If that is the case—it is your duty, Judy, to save him *at all costs*! It might even be considered noble if you sacrificed yourself for him. He has been so wonderful to you. What right have you to drag him to the gallows? Circumstantial evidence has hanged men before now."

Judy rocked herself to and fro in her agony of mind. "I shall have no interest in life if I have to lose Larry!"

"Yet I don't see what either of you hope for in life, threatened as you are with imminent disaster. If marrying this man will save both of you and allow Larry to get out of the country, I, personally, think you should not hesitate. Larry may make a fuss—so do kiddies when you dose them with what's going to make them well, but, afterwards, he will be thankful. No one in their senses prefers

to risk their neck when there is a way of escape!"

"It all comes back to the point that we shall have to accept Richard Dallas's invitation to Panighat."

"Very well—I see that it is unavoidable. Judy, dear! Larry is my dear brother, and though I am fond of you, I would do any mortal thing to rescue him from this dreadful position he is in—through his affection for you. I shall be eternally grateful to you if you will save him. And you can. You know you can! Therefore it is your duty. He would have been safe—free of care, enjoying life to the mast-head with all his wealth—but for you. He met you—and when men like Larry fall in love, they are so romantic and chivalrous that they are ready to give their lives for the loved one. It is now in your hands whether he is to be destroyed or saved. If you do as Richard Dallas wishes—go with him to Calcutta and marry him—he will keep his mouth shut concerning all he has discovered; and Larry, finding he has lost you for ever, will leave the country. Don't waste time about it. Once that car is salvaged, matters will move too fast for us. I'll take you to Panighat and you can make him take you away to Calcutta. Let him understand that you consent if he will behave honorably. Hold out for that."

III

To Larry, both Jo and Judy explained the visit as a temporizing measure. Tony had to look on,

helplessly, wondering how it would all end. John commended Judy's wisdom and good sense.

"There is nothing to be gained by pulling your house about your ears," he told Larry. "Swallow your jealous resentment and understand that you have no plans ready as yet by which you can afford to snap your fingers at the enemy. When it is quite settled about passages and passports for 'Mr. and Miss Anything-you-choose-to-call-yourselves', —brother and sister will be safest—you can do the drowning stunt. Get busy with the passports, and then do what you please. Have you told Judy about it?"

"No," said Larry. "Jo and I don't wish to raise her hopes till it is all fixed up. I have her photograph on the old one. You think it will be impossible to get the passports? Till we are sure of them, it's hardly worth while talking."

"Take a run down to Calcutta while Judy and Jo are at Panighat."

Larry decided on doing so without telling Judy lest she should hope too much, and suffer in proportion, if disappointed. When he confided his intention to Jo, he was struck by her half-hearted support. He did not know that her mind was full of the new idea by which his safety should be assured, so that he could leave the country without fear of wireless demands for his arrest on the high seas.

"Certainly get the passports if you like——"

She seemed about to say more but closed her lips, thinking better of it.

To Larry, it was a great idea to let it be imagined that he and Judy were drowned, and to leave the country with her under another name as brother and sister; so when Jo and Judy had gone to Panighat, he took the train to Calcutta; and, to avoid coming across anyone he had met at the wedding at the "Great Northern Hotel," he found rooms in a quiet boarding-house for the few days he expected to be in Calcutta.

IV

To help Larry's cause and drive Dallas to act honorably, Jo developed an indisposition on arrival at Panighat, and, for the next few days, pinned Judy to her side, obliging her to share her room, for which the unsuspecting girl was thankful though she did not learn the truth till Dallas had been driven to desperation and issued an ultimatum.

"You see," Jo confided to her, "I had to pretend so that he would send me home and carry you off to Calcutta to be married. If you manage him well, he will marry you as soon as it can be fixed up, after which, in the joy of possession, he'll leave Larry alone. It is worth it. Forgive me for thinking of Larry before you, but I love him and he is my brother. If you would prove your love, you, too, will think first of him."

"Mr. Dallas wants to know if you will let Billy take you home to-morrow—after we have left? As yet Billy knows nothing, but it will be the obvious thing for him to do when he wakes in the morning and finds us gone!" Judy spoke listlessly as though at the end of all feeling.

"It is what I have been working for." And Jo must be forgiven for cheering up considerably. Her nerves were at breaking-point with Larry and Judy in her care and so much of danger threatening them all. If Richard Dallas had it in his power to save them by taking Judy away, he was to be regarded as a benefactor. Jo felt she would breathe freely, again, once Judy was married to Dallas and Larry had left the country. It did not occur to her that Larry would rather die than see Judy go to Richard Dallas.

When Billy was not running about the district on official duties and at the beck and call of his chief, he sulked about his own house wishing his brother to the devil. He had not bargained for a visitation when Richard came on a visit; and now it was difficult to believe that the house was his and not his brother's. Moreover, he thoroughly disapproved of Richard's conduct with regard to Mrs. Sherman. Since his arrival, he had monopolized her, making her conspicuous in the eyes of the district as a married flirt which he would never have believed possible of her, especially as Larry was such a fine fellow. What she saw in his hawk-

faced brother, passed his comprehension, and he was on the verge of disloyally warning her to beware of him. Though Dick was his elder brother, his morals had never commanded Billy's respect, while now they were a source of anxiety and alarm.

"I wish I knew how to tell you what's troubling me," he told Judy pathetically when he found her alone for a moment; for his sense of responsibility was great since introducing Richard to her. Mysterious things were afoot which his brother refused to explain—for instance, the fact that his servant was packing all that morning as if a return to Calcutta were contemplated. Yet, Richard's plans were not confided to him. He had even heard from his personal servant that coolies had been ordered to carry luggage to the station to meet the midnight express. Evidently something important was afoot, and judging from Judy's pallor and restlessness, that this "something" concerned her deeply.

"What is it, Billy?"

"You will think it mean of me, but you do not know Dick as I know him, and, 'pon my word, he's not to be trusted where women are concerned. I feel sorry to say so, b-but it's the truth."

"I know what you are thinking, Billy—that we are too intimate, and you want to warn me."

"Thanks. That is exactly what I meant."

"You are a dear for thinking of me. But, Billy,

don't worry. I cannot confide in you, but I want you to know that I have no opinion whatever of your brother. I do not think there is a man I know who is more despicable."

"Oh-well! That is putting it strongly. Perhaps you are justified in saying so. I won't quarrel about it, for it relieves my mind considerably. I have never felt so nervous in my life about things. It seems he's been losing his head lately. But so long as you are not deceived, it's all right."

"Oh, I am in no way deceived," she cried bitterly.

"Then we are agreed." He smiled happily and dined with a better appetite.

Before he turned in that night, he ventured a remark to Dallas when they were smoking last cigars.

"You seem to be contemplating a move?—I coudn't help seeing that you have been busy packing."

"That's very intelligent of you!" said his brother sarcastically. "I can't get over your actually discovering the fact. There's hope for you, yet, in the Service you have chosen."

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Billy.

"I may as well tell you—in fact, I was just wondering how to do it, when you started—that I am off by the late express. I'm fed up hanging around here and have brought matters to climax.

It was all fixed up last night. Judy goes with me."

"What?" Billy's jaw dropped and his eyes almost fell out of his head.

"You needn't look like a stuck pig! It's all settled. I drive her to the station in your car which the mechanic will bring, immediately."

"Good God!" Billy breathed quickly. "What the devil does it mean?"

"It means that she is coming away with me."

"But she can't! She's in love with her husband. She won't leave him for you when the fellow worships the ground she——"

"Blast you! I want none of that cant. What is it to you, anyway?" Richard chewed at his cigar till it was useless, then flung it out of the window.

"There's some dirty trick here!" cried Billy. "I'm damned if I'm going to sit still and let this happen!"

"You'll mind your own business or I'll see that you do. Judy's a free agent. She's not married as you have been fondly imagining. She is——"

"Not married?"

Billy thought the world was toppling over his shoulders, and Dick enjoyed the spectacle of his amazement; even increased it by revealing bits of the truth after every few puffs at a new cigar.

"Not married. The two have been sailing under false colors even to the Lesters, for I can't imagine Jo Lester permitting her brother to keep his mistress under that respectable roof, though

she has passed him off as 'Sherman' instead of *Straughan.*"

"Will you explain? I am quite in the dark."

Richard Dallas explained with embellishments, taking care to show Billy that the coroner's inquest had "put the shoe on the wrong foot," for it was going to be proved that it was Larry Straughan, and not Judy, who had committed the deed. While Billy listened wide-eyed and tongue-tied to the whole account of the Kennedy case, as known to his brother, he could scarcely credit the fact that it was the story of Judy and Larry, whom he admired and even loved.

"My God!" he ejaculated again and again. "I wish you hadn't told me!"

"What a dam' fool you are! Here I am giving you material for making fame, and you wish I hadn't told you!"

"I—I'm going to put in for leave. My God!—and so she's going off with you?—What for? She can't be grateful to you for having dug all this out?"

"She believes I will shut my mouth and let the fellow Straughan get out of the country."

"Does *he* know she's going with you?"

"Of course not, idiot! He's a fiery Irishman, and would be mad with me for pinching his girl. He might want to shoot me, for all I know."

"What's to p-prevent him from chasing after you with a six-shooter?"

"Common sense, once his sister gets back and reasons with him. He will, then, realize that Judy is lost to him, and—anyway, to save complication and possibilities, I want you to have him arrested. Do it to-morrow morning before he can think of any wild-cat scheme."

Billy's face expressed a contempt so fierce, that his brother could not look him in the eyes. "You have g-got her to consent to go with you under the promise that you will say nothing to damage Larry whom she adores, and, all the while, you are scheming to have him arrested?"

"It's going to be a big feather in your cap, kid."

"Damn you!" hissed Billy. "God! But you are a blackguard, Dick!"

"Stop all that, you fool! Do your duty. If you won't, then I'll write a line to your Chief. He'll appreciate the information I have to give him."

It flashed across Billy's mind that, out of sheer friendship for Larry he would have to pretend to fall in with Richard's demands, and immediately his anger was controlled. Taking a turn in the room he then sat down, calmer and strangely dignified for him.

"I suppose friendships have to take a back seat in such a Service as mine!"

"So you are waking up to your duty!" snarled Richard.

"However, I can't arrest Larry Sherman——"

"Straughan—" snapped his brother. "Why not, pray?"

"Straughan," amended Billy, "for he went to Calcutta this afternoon. I met him just before the train came in and exchanged a few words with him. It seems, he's got business of some sort to settle and will be back in a couple of days."

"Oh, well—if that's so, the arrest will keep. He won't hear that Judy's gone till he returns. Jo Lester isn't making any fuss, for she is only too glad to get rid of Judy whom she imagines is the real danger. Gosh! I hope we won't run up against him in town, or I'll have to make him over to the police at once. But I'd rather let you get the kudos of making the arrest. It will fit in with the salvage of that car he put into the river so confidingly. Why, Billy, you'll be getting rapid promotion over this."

"I don't see that there is anything but circumstantial evidence against him, anyway."

"Good enough to hang him on. I have no objection to their putting him out of the way, for as long as he is around, I shall have no peace with Judy, nor safety from him."

"What are you going to do with Judy?" asked Billy with averted eyes. The sight of his brother's evil countenance made him sick.

Dallas gave a short laugh and shrugged his shoulders. "She thinks I'm going to marry her."

"Aren't you?"

"By God, no! I don't play that game. You don't see Dick Dallas allow himself to be fettered and bound even by such an elastic tie as matrimony! No, my son. I am no fool. I have no wish to have any woman make legal claims on me for support. As long as she pleases me and is fresh and beautiful, I dare say I shall want no other; but life plays dirty tricks on us by making women grow old and wrinkled. No wrinkled hag is going to fasten herself on to me in years to come and cripple my resources by her illnesses and operations. I've seen enough of that sort of married bliss. There is only one real pleasure in life, Billy—take that from me! One extravagant joy! and that is, to possess a truly beautiful feminine plaything while she is very young. Judy would be that—and, if she were less cold, would make an ideal—"

Billy rose and left the room.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SACRIFICE

AS Judy was sharing her room, Jo was awake till she left with Dallas to catch the midnight express to Calcutta, and sleepless till morning out of pity for the lovers who were so tragically parted. As yet, Larry did not know his fate, and the thought of his grief and despair when the news was broken to him, made her tender heart quail.

Most of the time between ten and twelve, while Billy and his brother carried on a conversation in agitated tones behind closed doors, Judy spent in writing an impassioned farewell to Larry. When it was ready, she placed it in an envelope and addressed it, blotting even the address with her tears.

"I want you to give this to Larry when you return," she said to Jo. "It will explain, exactly, why I am going away with this inhuman monster. I hate him! I hate him! but I am doing it because I love Larry more than myself and he has promised that Larry shall not be taken. If Larry goes now —by the next mail boat—he will escape altogether, for by the time they have discovered that I did not

do it and begin to fix their cruel suspicions on him he'll have landed somewhere on the continent and can make his way to America. I have told him what to do—I have begged him to give me up—to think of me no more, for by this time to-morrow I shall be married. Mr. Dallas says that the case is too strong against him and that nothing will save him if he stays in the country. Circumstantial evidence is sometimes so convincing as to bring in a verdict against the prisoner even if he is innocent. So add your persuasions to mine, dear Jo, and make him go at once."

"I imagine he won't want much persuasion once he knows that you are that man's wife. Your marriage will hit him very hard, but, better so, than the horrors of arrest and trial for a murder he did not commit. It was a bad day for him when he met you, Judy!"

"I know it, that is why I am making this ghastly sacrifice."

Jo took the letter from her and placed it under her pillow.

Time passed till the sound of the motor horn at the steps without, made Judy hurry through her good-bye to Jo in the bedroom. Dallas was waiting for her and led her to the car, but just before she put her foot on the step, Billy touched her arm, looking like the pale ghost of the boy she had known, and asked, piteously, if she knew what she was doing.

"Stand back, you young idiot!" said Richard through his teeth.

"Yes, Billy," said Judy, "I am well aware of what I am doing, and"—she bent and whispered despairingly in his ear, "I wish I were dead!"

"Don't go, Judy!"

"I must, Billy! I go for Larry's sake." With that she sprang in, and the car glided out.

"Scoundrel! Blackmailer! Curse you!" muttered Billy. But servants were looking on and he was obliged to control himself. There was little use in speaking with Jo Lester on the subject since she had conspired for this to save her brother. It was a rotten world that such things could happen. Billy believed that if Larry had killed Kennedy, he must have had good reason to. The man was drunk and was probably threatening Judy's life—anyone would have killed him—only he should have thought that Larry would have preferred to knock him down and wipe the floor with him. Pity he had had a knife at hand. There was always danger in the knife or gun at hand, when men lost self-control! As for Richard! He was the worst example of a cowardly blackguard he had met in his life. Who would have thought it!—his own brother, too!

II

The train ran in shortly after Judy and Dallas reached the station, and as it stood at Panighat

for only a few seconds, they had just time to climb into a first-class carriage on the chance of finding accommodation after it started.

Judy breathed a prayer of thanksgiving when she found that there was another passenger in the compartment. She had dreaded the long journey to Calcutta, unspeakably, and her relief was exquisite when a man rose from the seat on which he was reclining and politely made way among his scattered belongings for theirs.

"Are you travelling far?" Richard asked in surly tones.

"I am going to Calcutta," said the man.

Richard cursed under his breath.

Soon afterwards, when the train stopped at a junction, he told Judy he would look for an empty compartment; but returned still more ill-tempered, for the train was very full, which Judy considered providential, for she dreaded being alone with Dallas, and till they were married, wished to avoid all possibilities of a sentimental *tête-à-tête*.

The sun was high when they arrived, in the morning, at Howrah. Dallas called a taxi from among those waiting for hire, and gave the driver an address, after which they drove through the dusty streets, and across the Hughli bridge, towards their destination.

"Where are we going?" Judy asked anxiously.

"To my flat," said he, filling her with loathing as he fondled her hand. "Why are you so cold to

me? Have you no imagination? Think how soon you will be all my own!"

To be "all his own" was the very prospect that was turning her blood to ice. It was all she could do not to fall into fits of shuddering. The contrast of Larry's tender passion — his comeliness — his chivalry, with Dallas's coarseness and sensuality made her feel that his very touch was an insult. And she was on her way to his flat where she would be utterly in his power!

"How soon do you think we can marry?" she asked, her conventional mind anxious for, at least, a legal benediction on the sacrifice she was making. It would be a travesty of religion to expect a religious ceremony, so she was prepared to be satisfied with one in a registry office.

"We'll talk about that when you are rested and refreshed," said he evasively.

"It will have to be to-day—as soon as possible," she said nervously, "otherwise I must stay at a hotel."

Dallas laughed. "You put me in mind of a fluttering bird trying to escape from the hand that holds it fast. Haven't you realized, yet, my sweet one, that you are my captive!—adored!—nevertheless, my prisoner. You have to go with me wherever I wish. It is better than falling into the hands of the unsympathetic police."

"Mr. Dallas!—you said we were to be married!" cried Judy, seeing the cruel light of passion in

his eyes, as unlike the love she had known, as virtue is unlike vice.

"And if I say that I have no concern with any such rot, what can you do? You are as much mine, now, as if you were my slave—chattel—whatever you please! I have bought you. Don't you understand?" Seeing her hand fly to the door, he caught it in his and spoke threateningly. "Don't try on that game, you foolish child! Defy me—deny me—make a scene, and I have only to hand you over to the first constable I see on the road, saying that I have found the lady they are looking for. Is that to be preferred to my love and devotion?"

The threat answered instantaneously, for, if he gave her over, what mercy would he show to Larry?

After that she submitted meekly to his demonstrations of affection till the taxi drew up before a palatial building composed of flats, one of which was rented by Richard Dallas.

Across the road was a wide common with the river beyond. Judy had seen the Calcutta Maiden while staying with the Kennedys, and recognized it immediately. She had driven over part of it for her wedding in the cathedral and could not help a shiver as she recalled all that had evolved out of that fateful event.

Without a word, she followed Dallas up the steps to the lift and was soon carried to a floor,

high up, with an unprecedented view of Calcutta from the window on the landing on which they were deposited.

"This is my place," said Dallas opening a door with his key and leading her into an artistic hall. "I hope you will like it. Some day, I'll furnish it as a setting for your beauty—that is, if you are going to allow this arrangement between us to be a success. Looking at you here, I can scarcely believe that my dream is fulfilled! and that you, sweet bird, are snared and lie captive in my hand!" The triumph in his tones sickened her.

"I am frightfully hungry," she said, seeking wildly for diversion, "haven't you anything to offer me to eat?"

"I should think so! I sent off a wire last night, and I expect my servant is here somewhere." He pushed a button and a bell tinkled far away. Thereupon, a tall Indian servant with a face like a brown mask, stepped into the room and made a *salaam*.

"He puts me in mind of the Genie in 'Alf's Button'," said Judy with a forced laugh. She made herself appear at ease though her mind worked incessantly for a way by which she might yet escape. If she could only hold out for some days—temporize with him—till Larry had time to get away! If she might only fall desperately ill! If he would even take her to a registry office and marry her—she might endure her martyrdom

better. But to be obliged to live as his mistress in that lonely flat—friendless and isolated—the thought gave her agony.

Luncheon was served, Dallas making himself still more objectionable by his callousness of the servant's presence whenever he wanted to demonstrate to Judy his passion for her.

When luncheon was over, they retired to the sitting-room which overlooked the Maiden; and Judy pretended to find the view so interesting, that Dallas could not persuade her to leave the window. While she smoked his cigarettes, he, alternately, made love and sulked because she would not respond or show appreciation of his advances.

"One would think," said he, "that I was repulsive—a monster of some sort! What is wrong with you that you cannot soften towards me when I love you so?"

"Because I do not love *you*," she replied sparing his feelings out of fear of all he might do. "Isn't that enough? Why can't you prove your 'love,' as you call it, by an unselfish regard for my happiness?"

"Because I know so well that I could make you happy if you would not set your face against me. I could force you to submit, if I like, but I would far rather *win* you, so I am showing all this extraordinary patience which is foreign to my nature. Doesn't that prove my love? Other women would give their heads to be in your position—adored by

me. There is nothing I will not do to give you a good time. You shall have the run of the shops—jewels—a car to yourself. Anything within reason which you can desire!——"

——"Except an honorable name!" she challenged him.

"Don't forget that you have lost the right to that already."

She looked him indignantly in the eyes.

Dallas laughed confidently. "That doesn't go down with me. Your friends, Jo Lester and her husband, might give you and Larry Straughan the benefit of the doubt, but I am no fool. When a girl has been the mistress of a man, she might as well give up affectation and hypocrisy and realize that she has no honor to defend. Ultimately, she becomes the mistress of many men, so chuck all that Judy."

Judy turned her back on him and leant out of the window. She was so moved by anger and indignation that it was all she could do to remain silent, telling herself that she could only get the worst of it in an argument with such a bestial creature.

Far down in the street below, carriages and motors passed incessantly. The pavements had a never-ending stream of pedestrians of all nationalities, though mainly Indian. Hawkers in native dress carried their wares on their heads, shouting unintelligibly for custom. The green tree-tops

spread below to the river where a forest of masts indicated shipping at their moorings and trade inactivity.

Suddenly Judy's attention was riveted to the figure of a man, in grey, crossing the road on foot—so familiar in form and shape—wearing a hat at an angle which had often been the subject of good-natured chaff from his friends, that, involuntarily, she screamed aloud, "Larry!—Larry!"

It was such a piercing cry that it was heard even above the clang of tramcars and the rumble of the traffic, for the man below looked startled and gazed around unable to locate the direction from which the voice had called so loudly.

By the time Larry looked up, it was too late, for Dallas had sprung forward and dragged Judy back into the room. The window was tenantless, and the mystery of that cry was unsolved.

III

For half an hour Dallas watched Judy weep passionately—uncontrollably, then spoke.

"Do you want me to let you go back to him and have the two of you arrested at once and put into jail?" he inquired harshly.

Judy who had come to her senses, shook her head. "I—I couldn't help it!"

Dallas waited for some time pacing the floor, expecting to hear a knock and find Larry waiting

on the landing for admittance. But time passed, and his alarm subsided. In the meantime he had been feeling aware of sharp internal pain, a growing nausea, a temporary loss of interest in immediate concerns, which is inevitable when there is any real indisposition gaining over natural resistance.

"Damn!" he cursed. "It's something I have eaten."

"What is the matter?"

"God knows! Ptomaine, I shouldn't wonder." He recalled the fact that he had eaten of canned lobster with a hearty appetite; Judy had not touched it in spite of her vaunted hunger. What had he eaten? There had been a soup of tomatoes; lobster with mayonnaise; cold tongue and salad; jelly and fruit. Judy had played with the cold tongue, tasted the jelly, and eaten the best part of a plantain. He had accounted for most of what there was, with a gross appetite—breakfast had been too trifling to keep him supported till lunch. With the meal, he had drunk red wine—Judy had nothing but water. He looked at her enviously, for she was in no way affected while he was being subjected to paroxysms of pain.

Presently he retired to his room for treatment, and Judy had respite for some time, the whole of which was spent in looking out of the window for Larry. Had she seen him, she would, probably, have hidden.

But, Larry had convinced himself that he had imagined the cry. Judy was with Jo at Panighat, and he was nothing but a jealous, insane fool to think every sound he heard had reference to her. He had, therefore, gone about his business and forgotten, in a little while, that his name—or something like it, had been shrieked into space.

Half an hour later, Dallas put his head out of his bedroom door, looking haggard and doubled up with suffering, and moaned that he wanted a doctor. He pointed to the telephone on a writing-table and said gaspingly:

"Look up Dr. Mansfield's number—it is in the book—I must have something—I am most horribly ill. For all I know, it might be cholera."

He looked transparently frightened, Judy thought, as she obeyed, at once, more from a sense of duty than compassion. For her own sake, she could not help feeling that Dallas's illness was nothing short of an intervention of Providence.

Judy telephoned to Dr. Mansfield, while Dallas groaned and writhed on his bed, seized with violent vomiting and cramps.

"It must have been the lobster," said Judy standing by ready to give him anything he wanted.

"Gad! If it means I'm going out——!" His fear was contemptible. "Do I look as if I am very bad?" he asked her. "Do I seem dying?"

"You look ill, but not necessarily so bad as to die," said Judy comfortingly, for it was as impos-

sible to be unkind to a man so ill and frightened, as it is to kick one who was down. But, for his cowardice she had nothing but contempt.

"I am sure that swine of a bearer has been buying my provisions from the bazaar, where they get their stuff cheap, at sales, instead of at the stores. Curse him!"

When the doctor came, Dallas was almost past speech, so that a nurse was engaged by telephone, and everything that was possible, done, to arrest the seizure. By and by, Judy heard the doctor say it was ptomaine and that it would be touch and go.

She could have walked out of the flat that night and none would have hindered her, but that she was afraid of his revenge were he to recover, so she waited on in hopes that Dallas would get over the attack with a change of heart, and show himself merciful towards her for not running away. She slept fitfully on a couch in the sitting-room, fully dressed, expecting to hear at any moment that he was dying, and wondering what she should do in the event of her being stranded in Calcutta. For some reason, Larry was in town without telling her he was coming. He had not followed her, for, as yet, he could not have heard she had left with Dallas. What had brought him, she could not imagine, nor could she reach him, if she wished, for, in that crowded city, where could she find his address?

In the morning there was a change for the better, and Dallas sent the nurse to call her.

"Such a difference!" he said, looking up at her from his pillow with eyes almost normal again, but for the shadows underneath. "I'm on the mend at last, but as weak as a rat. Thought it was cholera, but it must have been ptomaine. Very boring for you, Judy, but I'll make up for it later on. At first I was afraid you had cleared out, but I think you know better than to give me the slip!"

CHAPTER XIV

JUDY'S INITIATIVE

DALLAS took three days to return to his normal diet and, on the fourth, the nurse was dismissed. Mortal dread of a relapse made him cling to her till his courage returned and the doctor said he was completely out of danger.

All that time, Judy was on parole in his flat. Had she dared to run away, he would have punished her as he well knew how to; so she stayed on, glad of the presence of the nurse who regarded her as Dallas's wife.

"Your husband is perfectly strong and well," she told Judy on bidding her good-bye once again at the lift door, "only, he is afraid to believe it. He is highly nervous, and this illness has frightened him considerably. Try to make light of his condition. It is purely imaginary."

Judy had no objection, whatever, to his playing the invalid, for his health gave him something to think of and kept him from concentrating his attention on herself. Content to know he had her with him, he looked, all that day, after every phase of his convalescence, nursing every feeling,

and exacting her co-operation in restoring him to his normal vigor, his thoughts revolving round himself entirely.

"I all but went out," he told her repeatedly. "It was a near shave! Gosh!—What would you have done? Gone back to your Larry?" came at last, showing what was at the back of his mind.

"Yes—and been thankful to God for the chance!" she answered impatiently. His selfishness and egotism were more than she could bear."

"You would not have got the chance!" he said maliciously.

"Why not?" (If Dallas had died, her chance and Larry's of escape from the country would have been worth risking.)

"Because I have provided for that! By now he is, or ought to be, in jail."

"What do you mean?"

"I am not such a fool as you take me for!" and he laughed in enjoyment of the trick he had played her. "When we left Panighat, I put Billy on the job. He's going to get kudos and promotion on that stunt. The papers, by now, should have headlines—'Arrest of the suspected murderer of Hubert Kennedy—Larrimore Straughan.' Billy knew all about his being in Calcutta, and was only waiting for his return to effect his capture. You have to thank me that you are not in the same boat!"

Judy sprang to her feet. "Are you telling me the truth?" she exclaimed.

"You'll know soon enough! Let's have the morning paper. I have not opened it for days."

"You cowardly cheat!" she gasped. "You unspeakable cad!"

"Rave as much as you like, you are as helpless in my hands as a babe." He reached across to a table and took up the morning paper which he opened and scanned without receiving any satisfaction. "What the devil——? I wonder what he is about? I put him on to Straughan the night we left and told him what to do. Perhaps it has already appeared!" He frowned heavily, then flinging the paper aside came over to Judy who was standing as if turned to stone, her hands clasped on her breast.

"Come, come! Don't be a fool. Let's forget all disagreeables, my pretty, and be lovers. I have been dying to get rid of that nurse, only she was so dam' useful to me, I had to keep her. But now I am well and as fit as ever, why," and he snatched the girl in his arms.

Judy struggled violently, hitting out at him. "Let me go, you unutterable coward! You contemptible swine!" she cried. "Do you think I care, now, if you hand me over to the police? If they have got Larry, they may take me, too, for all I mind! You promised! But you are a cheat! A low despicable brute-beast!"

Struggle as she would, she was no match for Dallas, who pinioned her arms and held her

securely. "Wild cat!" he snarled. "So, you show fight? I'll teach you who is your master. I'll make you pay for every scratch you have given me! I'll break your spirit, and when I have done with you, you can go to hell as quick as you like. I once dreamed of your love—I even thought I loved you, but Gad!—you she-cat! What I want, now, is to break you, and I'm going to do that, sure enough. I'm not good enough for you, am I? I am a brute-beast? Well—the brute-beast has you in his den and God in heaven is powerless to save you now!—squeal!—ask for mercy—you'll get none. You will learn yet to weep for your folly, for you might have had me for a lover——"

Neither had heard the lift door clash, footsteps on the landing, a knock on the front door. When it was repeated more imperatively, Dallas ceased speaking and released Judy. His servant had been given leave for the afternoon and as they were alone, he knew there was no one to announce the visitor.

"That's the doctor," said he, smoothing his hair, and composing his features. "Damnation! I'll have to see him!" Breathing hard and trying to recover his composure, he moved in the direction of the hall. "Go to your room," he ordered Judy. "I'll get rid of Mansfield and then resume our interesting little argument."

As the door was seldom locked when Dallas was at home, the visitor dispensed with the ceremony

of an announcement and walked boldly in, appearing on the threshold of the room before Judy could obey.

"Larry!" Judy gasped in a wild cry of relief.

"Straughan, by God!" fell from Dallas. It was not Mansfield, as he supposed, but the being he dreaded more than any other on earth. A quick glance took in the fact that his hands were empty —he carried no punitive weapon such as one in a desperate case would provide himself with. He came unarmed—but the whiteness of his face, the look of his eyes, the set of his jaw, made Dallas fall back instead of hold his ground.

"I heard by wire from Jo," said Larry to Dallas in the voice of a stranger, and taking no notice of Judy's cry, "that you had accomplished your devilish design and taken Judy from me. For that, and all I have had to suffer at your hands I have come to exact the only satisfaction possible. Defend yourself, you pitiful scoundrel!" He leapt at Dallas and struck him on the mouth. Instantly there was a clinch, and the two men swayed about the room, while Judy cowered in a corner trembling from head to foot with alarm.

"Larry!—Larry!" she cried in her desperation. "You will kill him!—Oh, stop! for the love of heaven, stop!"

"I will give him back to you—never fear!" returned Larry hoarsely, altogether misunderstanding her. "But, I'll make him unrecognizable first."

The sound of the hammer-like blows the two men struck at each other made Judy feel ill, for one or the other must, surely, be killed! A glimpse at Dallas's face showed features that were a mass of blood; there was a bruise on Larry's cheek—and Judy, unable to bear more, ran from the room to her own, to bury her face in a pillow and shut out the horrible sight and sounds.

Presently, Larry put his head in at the door, features quivering, but unharmed—"You can go to him, Judy," he said coldly, "he's not dead, nor is he going to die, but he'll be sorry for himself for some time to come."

"Larry!" she cried, "oh, Larry!—I have wanted you so!"

Larry gave a short laugh that was unlike anything she had ever heard from his lips, and disappeared. What passionate reproach and scorn it held! Judy sprang up and ran to find him. She could not bear that Larry should treat her so—*Larry*, who had always shown her the greatest chivalry and tenderness!

But he had gone as he had come, and the flat was as silent as the grave. Dallas lay stretched on the floor of the sitting-room like a dead man but for the heaving of his chest, his face smeared with blood and swelling past recognition. The doors lay open. Far away, somewhere round the well of the lift where the stairs wound to the ground floor, was the sound of light footsteps receding.

"Larry!" she called in agonized tones from the head of the stairs. "Larry!"

There was no response. The lift-boy brought the lift to the top for the sole purpose of explaining that the Sahib—if it was he she was calling—had passed out of the hall into the street.

II

Judy's first impulse was to get her hat and coat and follow, even if it meant walking to every hotel in the town and asking for him, but sheer humanity towards the unconscious man on the floor of the sitting-room, pinned her to the flat till she could be sure that he was able to look after himself. She had no longer any hope that he would spare either herself or Larry, and was determined, as soon as she could leave him, to run away. She had very little money in her purse, but would try to find work—to work her passage home, if it were possible without a reference. Larry's desertion of her was a sword thrust in her heart. He had no sympathy for her; he misunderstood her act; he could not forgive it. Possibly, he believed her married to Dallas—or his mistress! Judy wept out of wounded feelings and helplessness. Nothing in the world seemed to matter now that she had alienated Larry.

He had never had her letter, or he would have understood. No doubt, Jo had wired, keeping the letter to deliver to him later, hoping it would make

him drop arrangements which included the girl he loved, and to complete only his own. She did not dream that he would track Dallas to his flat and punish him, as far as lay in his power, for what he had done.

How was she ever to convince Larry of his tragic error concerning herself?

A little time passed in dressing Dallas's wounds and administering restoratives, after which he regained the full use of his senses and turned upon her with rage and curses, blaming her for his condition and promising dire vengeance the moment he could talk down the telephone to the police. Damn Billy for his squeamishness! He deserved to be fired out of Government for having allowed such a dangerous criminal to remain at large! and so forth and so on.

But several of his teeth having been broken, he retired first to the bathroom to gargle.

It was then that Judy seized her chance. Pinning on her hat, she picked up her already packed suitcase and slipping out on the landing, rang for the lift. When she was stepping into it, she heard Dallas call her.

Down sunk the lift through the shaft, Judy trembling in every limb lest Dallas should follow to the top and see her escaping. When she was in the street, she did not dare look upward, lest he should be in the window calling to the nearest policeman to arrest her.

A taxi passing was a god-send, and she hailed it.

"Where I taking Missie?" the native chauffeur asked.

"I'll tell you presently. Drive me to the other end of the town," she cried incoherently.

"Which end?" he asked surprised, thinking he was about to deal with a lunatic.

"That part of the town where I may find a cheap, respectable lodging. I have very little money and want the cheapest of cheap places—but *decent—respectable.*"

The man nodded and drove her to the northern end of Calcutta. Judy saw narrow and squalid streets, and poor looking houses utterly unlike those from where she had come, with grand façades in handsome surroundings. Here, it seemed, natives abounded. There were Eurasians, too, and native shops with tiled roofs and mud floors, as well as brick-built houses that looked mean and ill-kept. In one street, foreign women were parading the roadway or sitting on their doorsteps, a noisy, indecent crowd that filled Judy with alarm.

Eventually, in a quieter locality, Judy stopped the taxi and paid off the driver. She had no wish that even he should know where she might succeed in finding lodgings.

When he had gone, she walked down the road, peering about her for a card with BOARD RESIDENCE as an indication where she might apply for lodgings. But none was to be seen. Several

coolies had offered to carry her suitcase, jostling each other rudely for her favor. At length, the rudest having snatched it out of her hand, the rest fell back and allowed her to proceed on her way, the man following behind.

After a while, on the pavement coming towards her, Judy saw a small, familiar figure, and her heart leapt with excitement. It was a slim, Eurasian girl in a bright frock and hat with feathers and flowers that clashed horribly with the colors of her gown.

"Janey!" cried Judy catching her arm. "Oh, I am so glad to see you."

But the girl stared, and then, some indefinable difference told Judy she had made a mistake. "Aren't you Janey Gomez?"

"I think you must mean my cousin," said the young lady of the bright dress. "Is it Jane Gomez you know?"

"Yes—oh, is she your cousin? Where does she live? for I want to know of somewhere to lodge. I—I have nowhere to go."

The girl eyed her from head to foot, wonder in her gaze, for it was unusual for anyone of Judy's class to want lodgings there. "Are you in earnest?" she asked diffidently, speaking in the chi-chi accent common to Eurasians, and Europeans brought up in the East.

"I am, or I shall not know what to do to-night. I am a stranger in Calcutta."

"There are lots of grand boding houses at the other end of Calcutta where the swells live."

"I know, but I can't afford to go there. I am stranded, and have only a little money for a few days till—I can have more sent to me."

"My mother takes lodgers, though ours isn't a real boding house, my dear. If you like, we can ask her if she will give you the spare room."

Judy was full of gratitude, and accompanied her on her way home, to learn, as they walked together, that Jane was ill and always refused to see visitors.

"She had been queer in her head for some time, and has a fancee to keep her room."

"I mistook you for her, at first, but, now, I see the difference. Jane is thinner, and is, perhaps, shorter than you."

"Jane is prettee, but darker than me."

"I don't remember that—is it the same name?"

"No, we are not Gomez, but Smith. My mother married a Mr. Smith who is dead. He was an Englishman. His sister married Gomez, of Calcutta, and Jane is their child."

Judy thought it very frank of Miss Smith to tell her so much of her family history. She was, then, assailed with qualms lest she had been unwise in saying she knew Jane! It would be putting herself into the power of these people to make her over to the police!

But Jane had avoided giving evidence at the inquest, and she might have her own reasons for

not wishing to be called as a witness. Suppose Jane had actually committed the murder—she would certainly want to keep her room and see no one, being in mortal dread lest any new face should prove an enemy's?

Judy made up her mind to risk everything and see Jane. If she were innocent, it was still in her power to throw light on what happened, that gruesome night. Judy, therefore, expressed her regret for Jane's illness and renewed her anxiety to stay with the Smiths as a boarder.

The Smiths' house was one of those whitewashed, brick dwellings in two stories that looked like so many in that quarter of the town, uncared-for and mean. The wooden gate was sadly in need of paint, and the walled-in garden was a mere cat-run.

Mrs. Smith met Judy in the hall in response to a shrill call of "Ma! Where are you?" from her daughter, and was unashamed in a dressing-gown and slippers, uncorseted, and her hair screwed in a tight knot at the back of her head. (Judy learned, afterwards, that this was her regulation attire when at home. She "dressed up" only when she went to church or visited her friends, when she appeared, generally, in a startling medley of colors both brilliant and ill-matched, while, her waist having been squeezed into stays, she resembled nothing so much as a Noah's Ark lady with a straight-brimmed hat perched on the top of her head.)

"Ma, this is Mrs. Sherman who says she has met Jane."

Force of habit had made Judy introduce herself as "Mrs. Sherman" and it was too late to give any other name.

"Have you come to see my niece? If so, I am sorree," said Mrs. Smith who spoke in the same accent as her daughter. "She sees no one as she is veree poorlee. She gets such headaches, my! I donno what to think."

"Mrs. Sherman was not asking to see Jane, she onlee thot I was Jane. She is looking for rooms with bode."

"I have one spare room to let as I take a few boders. But it is not grand for a ladee like you."

"I am looking for cheap lodgings, for I cannot afford much," said Judy anxiously.

"I charge for full bode and lodging, two rupees eight annas a day."

The figure being ridiculously low, Judy closed at once and almost gratefully, glad to find a resting place while waiting to secure a free passage to England as a stewardess or nurse to children; or, possibly, to declare her identity and take her chance at a trial, should Larry be arrested.

That Larry should have turned against her, broke her heart; but what could she say to him in self-defense? If he had misinterpreted her act, he would be sorry when he read her passionate letter of farewell and understood that it was for his sake,

alone, she had gone away with Richard Dallas whom she loathed. For the rest, how should she ever make him believe the truth? He would always think——

The idea of all he was now thinking bowed her to the earth with humiliation and shame. Things were as bad as they could be—except for the fact that she was thankful she had escaped from Richard Dallas and the horror of his embraces. There would be no limit to his malice and revenge, but what did anything matter?—she had made Larry despise her—she had seen scorn and contempt in his eyes, and might just as well be dead!

III

The promise of the shabby exterior was amply fulfilled by the conditions within Mrs. Smith's abode. Judy found that the rooms were slovenly and ill-kept; the matting, which was of grass and coir, was frayed and in holes. The furniture was scanty and country-made. She wondered who were the boarders who made such a place their permanent home?

She discovered, after she had been in residence for a few hours, that Jane had a little room to herself at the end of the landing above the ground floor, and, that next to it, with a door of communication which was kept locked, was a lodger who was a mystery to the household, for he was almost

as much of a recluse as Jane, going out occasionally with an attaché case, and maintaining an impenetrable reserve about his occupation or profession. He appeared at dinner—which was served at seven o'clock on a soiled table-cloth and in dishes that were of different patterns, all more or less cracked —and Judy was immediately interested, for he was of a different type to the Smiths' other boarders who were Eurasian city clerks and shop assistants. He looked like a human ferret who saw a great deal more than they gave him credit for, and was never weary of acquiring an intimate knowledge of human nature. People interested him amazingly, Judy imagined, by the way he studied her when he thought she was not looking and the questions he asked on matters not concerning himself.

"Your niece had a bad night," he told Mrs. Smith while engaged on bread and cheese. It seemed to Judy he made his dinner chiefly of that, as the Indian dishes were too full of curry and garlic to please his fancy. In fact, it was, also, Judy's principal food, for she had no appetite, and the strange diet revolted her.

"My niece will have to go to hospital if she doesn't mind her nerves mo'," said Mrs. Smith unsympathetically.

"How do you kno' she had a bad night?" asked Miss Smith, a resentful gleam in her eye.

"I could hear her walking about her room."

"If she disturbs you, I vill send her away to her godmother's at Bally."

"On no account," said the ferret rather eagerly, thought Judy. "I was wakeful and heard her, otherwise, I sleep like a top. Why don't you persuade her to come down and mix with people. It would do her good."

"Thanks, she has no need of your advice," said Miss Smith.

"You be quiet, Emmerline!" her mother said reprovingly.

"I mean it in the best spirit," said the man. "I noticed when she last came to table she looked pale and nervy. It won't help her to be too much alone."

"Perhaps a change will do her good," said one of the lodgers. "Why not send her to Puri?"

"Why not send her to the moon?" said Mrs. Smith, implying that no one could afford to send Jane anywhere for a change.

When the three ladies occupied the drawing-room later in the evening, the Smiths discussed the strange lodger, and Judy found it interesting to hear what they had to say of him.

"He's odd," said Emmeline. "A little bit off the top. Or he is smitten with Jane. How he keeps on about her! My! I never knew the like."

"I wonder wot he does for a living," said her mother. "He writes a lot, but burns the contents

of his vaste paper basket, and never leaves writing about."

"Perhaps he is a journalist? They make it a business to study character and watch people so as to write about them," said Judy.

"Well, I hope he'll make me the heroine of a novel," said Emmeline, preening herself before a fly-spotted mirror in the shabby-genteel room.

"Not he, my dear!" said her mother. "The vay you go for him vill make him dislike you too much."

"He's too inquisitive for me! Whenever that tailor comes and is allowed to go into Jane's room, his head comes out of his door full of curiositee. 'Who is that man?' he said the last time to me. 'What's that to you?' said I. 'Nothing at all,' he said so sweetly, 'only, it seems Miss Jane makes exceptions for some and not for others.' Did you ever?"

"Didn't you say he was onlee a *darzi* who comes for orders to make the clothes she needs?"

"Why should I? Let him think what he likes."

"I think he takes an interest in her since she nearly died by taking the wrong medicine some nights ago in the the dark," said Mrs. Smith, by way of explanation to Judy. "She took a lotion instead of cough mixture, and was choking. Mr. Stanley heard her and went to her help, then roused me and went for the doctor; after that, he is always asking about her."

"Have you told her about me?" asked Judy.

"She says she has never known a 'Mrs. Sherman,' said Emmeline.

"I had another name when I knew her," said Judy, leaving them to infer that she had since been married. "I would like to see her if I may?"

Mrs. Smith promised she would see about it in the morning, and the subject dropped.

CHAPTER XV

JANE

THE next morning, at breakfast, one of the lodgers was very mysterious concerning the supposed journalist, after the gentleman had left the table and the house.

"Well—if you would like to know who he is," he said at last when Emmeline had exhausted every art of cross-questioning and was showing signs of abandoning interest, "he's a detective."

"A detective?" questioned Mrs. Smith, surprised.

"How funnee!" cried Emmeline. "I feel quite excited, never having met one befo'."

Judy felt sudden "goose-flesh" all over and remained perfectly still while reasoning out the matter with herself. He was there before she came. He was not there on account of herself. Why not because he had discovered something about Jane? . . ."

"He's a man employed by the police—in fact, he is an Inspector in plain clothes whose special duties are detective jobs. I met a chap I knew at the Eden Gardens last night, and we were listening to the band when this johnnie passed.

My friend said he knew him, and told me what I am telling you."

"But what on earth does he want here?" From Mrs. Smith.

"He's probably lodging here while he is on the track of someone in these parts who's wanted by the police."

"I shall be doublee interested in him after this. How clever he is! What a feather in Jane's cap that he should be so smitten with her!" said Emmeline.

Judy was thrilled with growing alarm. Apparently, the Smiths knew nothing of Jane's connection with Hubert Kennedy? For a better understanding of the circumstances, she did a little private detective work on her own account.

Where did Jane meet Hubert Kennedy?

What chances had she of meeting men in his walk of life?

To learn the truth, she put Emmeline tactful questions. Most girls worked for their living. Emmeline helped her mother. What had been Jane's job? she asked, after relating her own circumstances in England, where she had studied to become an artist.

"Jane used to be an assistant at Wall and Henderson's—a drapery store, and she was often admired, she was so prettee."

"Hasn't she ever wanted to marry?"

"Jane could have married several times, but her

head was turned by some swell in town who used to take her out in his car—after dark. She was a sillee fool. Ma told her so often, 'Don't go with a man who wants to take you out *after* it is dark. He is ashamed to be seen with you and means no good'—as it has been proved," she added dropping her voice meaningly and scowling with resentment.

"Poor Jane!"

"Lots of people wont pity her ven it is known," said Emmeline. "But don't tell Ma I told you. She is that ashamed, she can't bear talk, and Jane is her sister-in-law's own child, an orphan, and brought up by Ma."

"I am very sorry to hear this!"

"We are sorrier to have to bear it. That's vy she keeps her room; anyone, seeing her, would guess."

"Oh, poor Jane!"

"We girls are fools—that is to say, the soft ones, like Jane. He made love to her during those outings—she never vill tell who he is or anything, onlee cries if we ask questions and says he's dead. Of course, if he's dead, nothing can be done. But Ma thought if he has people, they might be made to provide for the child. But she vont speak! You knew her, once. I vonder if she vill tell you?"

"I want to see her so much!"

"Well—come now. We needn't ask permission. Just go in and pacify her if she gets excited, for the

doctor says her heart is veak and anything might happen if she gets too much upset. That is vy Ma has given up going for her to tell the man's name. She can't say a vord, but Jane gets faint and cries."

"I will try not to upset her. I will show her that I am just a friend."

Emmeline led the way, and putting her head in at Jane's door announced, "Mrs. Sherman who is dying to see you, Jane."

Judy went in and saw the girl she had met at Garden Reach, and was shocked at the change in her. At first she was almost unrecognizable by the emaciation of her face and the hollowness of her eyes.

"Oh, Janey!" Judy exclaimed pitifully. "I would hardly have known you!"

"*You*!" came from Janey in a wail. "Why have you come?"

"I came to see how you are, Janey. I was so sorry to hear you are ill."

"How did you know I was here?" piteously.

"I did not know——" Judy exclaimed, and Jane's face cleared.

"I never go anywhere or see anyone," said Jane. "I feel weak and spiritless."

"You will be better when your trouble is over."

"It will never be over till I am dead," she said through quivering lips. "Will you take a seat?"

Judy sat down and took an interest in the little garments she was working.

"I didn't guess this that night. If only I had!"

"What would you have done?"

"I should have gone away immediately—much might then have been saved."

"I don't know," Jane remarked unexpectedly. "Who can tell!"

"Jane!—I have puzzled so long about that night—"

The girl's hands flew to her ears, her face became panic-stricken. "Oh, don't speak of it! don't speak!" she interrupted in a wail. "Shall I ever be allowed to forget it?"

"You were there, Jane?"

Jane buried her face in her hands and shook from head to foot, and Judy remembering the cousin's warning, had to desist. Some other time she would coax her into becoming confidential, but —Judy began to wonder if, after all, Jane was responsible for the deed. Otherwise, why was she like this?—worn to a shadow with grieving—so unable to bear mention of that night?

"How do you know I was there?" Jane asked defiantly after a long silence. "You did not see me?"

"No, but I heard you speaking to him, telling him to wait till morning——"

"That might have been someone else!"

"I don't think so. Jane, why are you regarding me as an enemy? This has been a terrible blight on my life—I, who am innocent, have been sus-

pected. You read the report on the inquest?"

"Again you are bringing it all up, and it will kill me!" she cried dashing her head from side to side. "I cannot bear the thought of it! Anyone might have been there. There was his bearer in the house—sleeping on a mat in the hall—why don't you think of him?"

"Only because I heard you speak."

"There! And you would fasten the guilt on me, because I spoke?"

"Never! I only wanted to know if you could tell me anything."

"I can tell you nothing, for I—I was not there. I had gone home long before."

As her face was hidden, Judy could not gain anything by staring at her in amazement for the lie.

"If you won't tell me, Jane, I shall leave it alone," she sighed. "But you heard of them blaming me, and you kept silent, knowing that I could not have done it. I had no knife—I had just my two hands —and the moment he fell into my room I fled."

Jane maintained a sulky silence.

"You would have seen me arrested, tried, and hanged, Jane, when a word from you would have shown that there was no possibility of my doing it?"

"I knew nothing! nothing!" Jane panted, her face growing so faint, her lips so blue, that Judy held a glass of water to her lips and promised to say no more. "What can I do for you? Let me do

some of your needlework. I have nothing to occupy me."

"No—no!—I must do it all—besides—I cannot forget that you came in the way. But for you, he might have married me. He loved me before you came."

"How I wish I had known!"

"Will you be staying here long?"

"I don't think so. I am trying to get away home—only it is difficult when the police are trying to find me."

"They are not looking for you now," Jane said grudgingly.

"How do you know that?" Judy asked surprised.

"I heard from someone who knows. Never mind who told me."

"You are quite wrong, then, for they are trying to find me, and someone else."

"They have given up looking. You and he will have no more trouble from them—unless they want you as a witness, one day."

"Why, Jane—how do you know all this?"

"I cannot say—I cannot tell you any more. I was a fool to say as much!—but you have had so much to bear—and I would save you, if I could. I am not so mean and heartless as you think."

"I think you were very kind to me—I can only remember your kindness—that terrible night!"

Jane winced perceptibly. "I wish to God I had slept in your room!" she cried out. "Then there

would have been two of us—*Two.* Two to one! and all would have been saved! Oh, what madness —what a fate!——"

Without any warning, Jane fainted, her head falling back in the chair, and Judy was terribly alarmed. She dashed water in the pallid face, and screamed aloud for Emmeline.

Both mother and daughter came running in full of agitation and annoyance. "There! I said how she'd take on with a stranger. She shouldn't have excitement, yet she's been talking and talking— I could hear from my room——" Mrs. Smith laid Jane flat on her bed and applied smelling salts to her nostrils; Emmeline ran wildly about the room for a heart stimulant which was ultimately discovered on the bedside table.

In the end, Judy came away, her mind in a greater fog than ever concerning the events of that fateful night. She believed that Jane had lied— and what had she meant by *two to one*?

Mrs. Smith had not wanted Judy to see Jane, but since the mischief was done, she had made the best of it and tried to explain away the unhappiness of the girl's state.

"She was always prettee and people made a fuss of her. She got a good situation in a shop and was getting on so nice when one day a gent who was passing through that department with a lady, stopped and bought a yard of ribbon from her. It was onlee to get talking, any fool knows. But

Jane's sillee head was turned. He called for her, after that, at the Y.W.C.A., and took her motoring. Then, when the authorities objected to the lateness of the hours she kept, she came to lodge with me, like any of the boders here, paying mo' than others. I guessed the man was paying, but I hoped he intended to marree her. There have been cases of girls marrying vell from our class; vy not Jane who was so prettee? So I said nothing.

"Then, one day Jane looked unhappy—she cried all night. She wouldn't eat. I scolded her—I was sure there was a lovers' quarrel and that it would be made up the next day—but no! weeks passed, and he never came any mo', and all the time she grew pinched and thin. Then, for a few days, she got ill and stayed away from vork. I began to suspect. I said to her—'vot have you been doing, miss?' I was that vild, I shook her. But she could onlee cry and say she had been deceived, she had been promised marriage, and now he was about to marree another. Oh, the scene! I knew she was done for!—and so she was. She was sacked from her job, and on my hands. Could she get another? How we tried and tried! No good; she was so delicate, people would not take her on. Besides, I knew the time would come ven she would have to give up.

"Then, one day, she said she was going to her godmother at Bally for a week-end, and thinking the change would do her good, I said 'Go,' and

she vent. Next morning she returned shaking and shivering and almost out of her senses. My!—what a to-do! I asked and asked to kno' wot was wrong, but she had had a fright—onlee a 'fright.' She told a pack of lies—I knew by the way she contradicted herself—and, in the end, I was as vise as I was befo'. She had met a drunkard—he had tried to assault her and she ran away. That was all. I wrote to her godmother, and had a reply next day. Jane had never been near the place. I, then, beat the child. My! I am sorree that I did, for it made her so miserable that I thot she was going out of her mind.

"After that, I bot stuff and told her to get busy making the necessary things by hand. And ven a tailor came, saying he used to vork for Wall and Henderson, and wanted to see the Baba, I thot it would give Jane diversion. So he has been coming regular. But she seems to go worse and worse. She is now so vasted that I don't believe she vill get over her trouble. It vill be the death of her."

Judy was able to read between the lines of the story and fill all the blanks that puzzled Mrs. Smith, but kept her own counsel hoping some day to so win Jane's confidence as to hear all. It was most of all important that she should know what Jane meant by saying that the police had abandoned their search for her and Larry. That might almost explain why he had not been arrested—even

after the discovery of his car in the river? Why? —if so, who had they in mind? was it Jane, herself, —and was she aware of the fact?

It threw light on the presence of the detective in the house. Judy's heart leapt with hope for herself and joy for Larry; but she was sorry for Jane even if she was the, really, guilty one. If so, it had been done on an impulse of jealousy—for she had loved Hubert greatly!——

Judy began to feel convinced that Jane had done it, and yet she longed to save her from punishment under the law. Penal servitude in her present condition would be the death of her, even if they did not hang her. Judy almost believed she would die under the strain of the trial.

II

The following evening, at dusk, Judy sensed a feeling that the ferret, whom the lodger declared was a detective, wanted to speak to her. He kept her under observation so long—hung about in the sitting-room so persistently, that she grew nervous and wished to put an end to her suspense. She, therefore, strolled into the empty hall and gazed at the mildewed prints on the wall, certain that if he wanted to say something, he would not neglect the opportunity she was giving him. Emmeline was singing to her own accompaniment on a tuneless piano, so that it was difficult to tell which was most

inaccurate, the piano or the voice, and two of the lodgers hung enraptured over the instrument waiting eagerly for their turn to sing. Mrs. Smith was arranging Jane's room for the night; the hall was deserted.

As expected, the ferret appeared, looking cautiously about him before advancing towards Judy.

"Queer household this," he said pleasantly, to establish something in common.

"Very well-meaning people," said Judy, with equal pleasantness.

"Oh, yes. Undoubtedly. Very well-intentioned and honest."

"I rather like them," said Judy.

"I would, too,—if they would only have some regard for cleanliness. It's queer how these people can be blind to the dirt of their surroundings, and yet, in their persons, hygienic and wholesome. They bathe daily, and would sooner miss a meal than matutinal ablutions."

Judy laughed, which placed them on a friendly footing.

"I have welcomed your coming very much, Mrs. Kennedy," said he, speaking her name distinctly and paralyzing her with shock. "It was a lucky stroke, for I think you can help me better than anyone else. How, and where, can we discuss business?"

"You have me completely at a disadvantage,"

said Judy. "I don't know whom I am speaking to, or the nature of your business."

"All can be simply explained if we can meet and talk things over. Will you come to tea with me somewhere?"

"I—I—I have not been going anywhere lately," she stumbled.

"I guessed as much. You have been out of town till recently."

"Yes," she said, wondering how he knew so much.

"You are wondering how I have known your movements. They have been known to us for a considerable time. That is what our department is for."

As Judy was silent and trembling visibly from excessive nervousness, he went on in a tone of reassurance. "You have nothing to fear, as far as I know, at present,—if at all. Sooner or later, I should have had to look you up for help; but, as I say, it is lucky you came. I hear you met Miss Smith on the road and took her at first for her cousin?"

"I did, at first glance."

"Jane Gomez—who is 'Smith' among her relatives and wherever she has worked, out of courtesy to her aunt who brought her up,—is a wreck of what she was. She is really so precariously ill that one is frightened to approach her, and will have to exercise the greatest tact in doing so, when it be-

comes absolutely imperative to lose no time. I would rather have waited till she is over this event which is pending in a couple of months, or so; but should she die, we would be very much hampered. It is necessary to know a few things—and these I'll put before you at tea—to-morrow—say at Peliti's?"

"I shall be very pleased," Judy said, so taken aback, that she hardly knew what she was saying.

"Four o'clock, then. The place won't be so full at that hour."

He returned to the sitting-room and spent the rest of his time with his eyes glued to the pages of a book.

CHAPTER XVI

LENDING A HAND

IT was wonderful to Judy to feel that she could walk out in broad daylight without fear; yet the habit of fear was so overmastering, that she could not help nervous shocks every time she saw a policeman.

After she had walked a little way, she hailed a *ghari* and was driven to Peliti's Restaurant where the ferret was waiting for her. She had learned that his name was Stanley, but thought he was more like a Jew with his drooping nose and quick dark eyes.

"I notice that you are still very nervous. You have no need to be," said he, as he led her to a seat at a corner table.

"I cannot help being nervous," said she. "I keep looking for someone all the time and wondering if I should meet him—and what I should do."

"You mean Mr. Straughan?" And Judy was amazed.

"How could you possibly have guessed?"

"I never guess. I make it my business to know," said he. "It is my profession. Mr. Straughan's

movements have been watched ever since he came to town—and yours, too. We keep in touch with those who will be useful to us."

"Mr. Dallas told me that Mr. Straughan would be arrested the moment I left Jamunghur—this, after assuring me that he would be safe!"

"Mr. Dallas has no guarantee for anything that has nothing to do with him. He is an amateur who imagines he is a second Sherlock Holmes, but he makes the mistakes of a conventional mind. He generally goes all out on the wrong scent. We have an organization. He works by inference. We have information, and the means of obtaining information he cannot command. At present, what we know, made us refuse to take Mr. Larrimore Straughan into custody when he walked into the police station the other day and wanted to give himself up as the murderer of Hubert Kennedy."

"He did that? Why?" cried Judy, shocked.

"A bit weak in the head, I should imagine. Some idea that he was saving you! We often have cases of that sort and have to be very careful not to make fools of ourselves or let ourselves be made fools of."

"When was that?" Judy asked, while Mr. Stanley gave a liberal order for tea.

"After he nearly laid Mr. Dallas out. He came straight away still panting from his exertions, and suggested that we should take him into custody."

"How ever did you hear of his thrashing Mr.

Dallas?" asked Judy, more than ever astonished. Was there anything this man did not know concerning Larry and herself?

"He told us, himself. He was absolutely unrepentant. Then—was for taking all the blame for the Kennedy affair, tili we laughed in his face and told him not to be a fool. He stuck to it, however, till he was told that neither he nor you was, now, wanted, except as witnesses when the time arrived. His face, then, changed, and he looked another man."

"Did you see him—were you there?"

"I heard all about it from my fellow-officials. We talk of our work and all our people accomplish, as though personally identified with it."

"Where is he now?"

"He is at the 'Great Northern' to be on hand when wanted. He has promised not to leave Calcutta without keeping us informed where he is to be found in an emergency. Now to business," he said, bending towards her and lowering his voice though he had been speaking in low tones that were not calculated to carry further than her ear. "There is a man who visits Jane Gomez frequently. He pretends to be a tailor, but is no such thing. I know who he is—but I want to know his business with Jane, for the fact of his camouflage and repeated visits is quite sufficient to show me that there is more in it than meets the eye; therefore, we must get at the bottom of the game. Every

time he sees her, she is so ill that the doctor has to be called. He upsets her—I believe he is blackmailing Jane Gomez."

"Who is he?"

"He was a bearer in the employ of Hubert Kennedy."

"Oh!" exclaimed Judy recalling the dark head that looked in on her that night from the landing when she wanted to know if Hubert still slept.

"I believe I saw him there—he was shutting up the house."

"You saw him?" eagerly.

"He terrified me, for he scowled so, looking so vindictive."

Stanley seemed to be thinking for some minutes and did not speak while Judy poured the tea. The restaurant was filling rapidly with well-dressed, fashionable people, but Judy was too much engrossed with the subject on hand to interest herself in her surroundings.

"We have had our eye on the man for some time, ever since I heard from old Mr. Kennedy that his son had given him notice to quit, because of his threatening attitude since receiving a thrashing from his master. Hubert Kennedy had been a bit of a bully with his servants, and, on one occasion, humiliated his bearer; from which time the man's manners were defiant and insolent. On that night, he would naturally have been the last to retire among the servants, for he had personal duties to

perform towards his master. Your having seen a servant about, only confirms the theory.

"Then, suspicion of a grave character attaches to Kennedy's mistress, Jane Gomez. She was there that night——"

"Oh, how did you know that?" cried Judy, amazed.

"We have ways of finding out. As a matter of fact, the *durwan* who was missing, has approached the police since the inquest, and he had a great deal of valuable information to give us. In the first place he was so curious as to Larrimore Straughan's presence in the house that night, that he kept an eye on the young man, and his statement is, that Straughan spent the hours of that night in the garden. From the moment you retired to your room, he left the house and took a seat on a garden bench till noises of Kennedy's shouts and hammering brought him into the flower garden in front of your room. So his evidence clears Straughan. But Jane Gomez was with Kennedy most of the time, nursing him, so I understand, and her hurried exit, followed by the bearer's, must have taken place the instant after Kennedy was killed. Later on, the *durwan* met the bearer who told a roundabout tale to him of the murder of which he says he was an eye-witness. He says, while Kennedy was banging on your door, which was locked, she was trying to draw him away. This exasperated the drunken man who turned upon her. Then she struck him

with a knife, and he fell backward against the door, bursting it open by his fall.

"Now, the wound having been inflicted in the back, shows that he had been stabbed from behind. If so, Jane could not have struck him as he turned upon her, according to the bearer's tale. Besides, in my opinion, Jane is not that sort of girl who could, for any reason, stab a man, least of all her lover. She is too timid and delicate, and without initiative. But I may be wrong. The murder lies between them. Straughan has since told us your story of the night, and, it seems, it is true that she must have been persuading Kennedy to return to his room. I cannot believe she could have struck him when his back was turned, and I would not put it beyond the bearer. Anyhow, one of the two, and I should not like to make a mistake, so we are watching both. We have got to get at the bottom of this pretty quick, for my chief is cutting up rough at the delay in arresting Jane Gomez. The newspapers think they know more about it than anyone, and would have had both Straughan and you hanged without a chance, even, of a trial."

"What can we do?"

"I have come to lodge here that I might find out what this servant has to say to Jane Gomez. It is a lucky coincidence—one in a million—that you, also, came here. If one could get a chance of being

concealed in the room when next he calls, there will be something doing. I am of opinion that this can be managed. The man will call on Jane tomorrow morning at eleven—You wonder how I learned so much? I was eavesdropping—a nasty, low-down thing to do, but we detectives often have to resort to such mean tricks when much is at stake. But, unfortunately, that was all I heard. By the time I found out the man was there and arrived at the keyhole of the door between our rooms, he was threatening her with another visit. 'On Saturday, I will come at eleven in the morning, then we'll see!' I heard him say as he left her. The keyhole, however, is not satisfactory in case voices are lowered. I must be *in that room*, and I want you to manage it for me without letting Jane know."

"But—poor Jane!—it is so like spying!" Judy hated to assist the detective to spy on her and, possibly, in the end, arrest her for Hubert's murder.

"Justice must be done. But I am convinced that we shall find Jane is being terrorized by that man. They two were on the spot when Kennedy was killed and who is to prove who did it? That is what he is trading on."

"Oh, wait a bit!" said Judy, remembering Jane's incoherent remark. "She said something very strange." And she repeated Jane's words:

"*I wish to God I had slept in your room—then there would have been two to one.*"

"What could she have meant by that?" asked Judy.

Mr. Stanley nodded his head slowly. "I am glad to hear of that. I am more than ever convinced that I'll get to the bottom of it all if I can hide myself in her room at the time the native is visiting her."

"How shall I manage it?"

"When next you are talking to her—let it be to-night, unbolt the door between our rooms when you have the chance. I shall, then, slip into the room before he is expected, and hide somewhere."

"I hate the idea!"

"You would, but you wish to clear Jane and bring the guilty one to justice?"

"Poor Jane! I hope it will be proved that she didn't do it."

"I feel sure she did not do it, but she is frightened. Terribly frightened, I surmise, lest circumstantial evidence might make it impossible to prove her innocence. With her word against the native's and jealousy as the motive, she'd find it hard to clear herself unless we help her."

Judy felt she would do anything to help Jane, and promised to do as he wished. She was becoming infected with the detective's belief in Jane's innocence, and puzzled as to how she should manage to win Jane's confidence so as to be able to

advise her in the matter of the servant who must be made to own to the crime while believing himself alone with her who must have seen him do it. It would be necessary for him to express himself clearly on the subject, if Mr. Stanley's plot were to be at all successful.

So intent was she on the plan, that she started violently when the detective drew her attention to Larry Straughan who had entered and was moving towards a table in company with Gerard Bolton and a lady. Gerard Bolton looked dissipated, as usual, and a bad contrast to Larry who was clear-eyed, and a fine specimen of a clean living man.

The lady was one of the fast set, pretty and attractive, and full of artificial ways. She was probably Gerard Bolton's friend, but all her attention was on Larry whom she flattered and fawned upon, till Judy felt desperate. They had parted (on a misunderstanding which might never be explained), and Judy could not bear to see another woman taking liberties with him; or to think that he was exposed to the fascinations of a flirt.

Suddenly their eyes met, and in Judy's was anxiety—appeal——

But Larry turned his away, and it seemed to Judy that she had ceased to exist for him!

He would not forgive her for going away with Dallas—surely Josephine had, by now, forwarded to him her heartbroken letter written before she

left Panighat—that would show him the depth of the sacrifice she had contemplated! How should she ever tell him that the sacrifice had not been made? Would he believe her? In his eyes she had lost her charm—she had no longer the same value—having, as he imagined, given herself to Dallas!

Judy felt the need of air—she wanted to rush out of the place—to get away from the sight of Larry whose eyes had grown cold—whose smiles were, now, for others.

"Let us go," said she, forcing a smile as she rose, thankful that they had finished and that Stanley had settled the bill. "Mr. Straughan and I have parted over Mr. Dallas. I should like to tell you all about that if I may."

They drove by taxi to the Gardens, and, while the band played to the throngs whose habit it was to take an airing every evening by the riverside, Judy and her escort paced the lawn where it was quietest, and she related for her new friend's understanding, since he knew so much already, all that had taken place since she ran away from Hubert Kennedy till Richard Dallas plotted to make her his mistress,—and failed.

"That accounts for the thrashing he had from Straughan and his revengeful anxiety to have you both cast into prison!" smiled Mr. Stanley. "He was on the telephone about Straughan and you, and was politely told that his information was

worthless. I guess Straughan is a bit cut up over this and has lost his bearings. Give him time, and things will come right again; it is rather soon for him to adjust his perspective correctly."

II

Judy was grateful to the "ferret" for his considerate treatment of herself and the thoroughness with which he was determined to get at the truth of the Kennedy mystery without making futile arrests to satisfy the thirst of newspaper editors for dramatic developments.

To fulfill her promise, she slipped into Jane's little room after dinner to sit with her and seek to win her confidence; and while there, looked about her to discover a likely place in which the detective might hide. But the conditions were not promising. The room was not only meanly furnished, but anyone seeking to hide under the bed would easily be seen, for there was no counterpane to hang low, nor draperies of any kind.

Judy was in despair. It was not even of any use to attempt to unbolt the door between Jane's and Mr. Stanley's rooms, as Jane, being nervous and consequently wakeful, would be sure to discover that it was unfastened, and bolt it again.

Something else would have to be done. She thought of the bathroom. Since every room, even in the meanest of houses, had its bathroom, Judy

wondered why the detective should not steal up the back stair which led to Jane's bathroom, and listen to all that took place from behind the *pardar* which hung from rings in the doorway? This she intended to propose.

Meanwhile, her tender sympathy and eagerness to comfort the unhappy girl was having its inevitable result on her weak and hysterical nature.

"You and I have both seen so much trouble, Jane. It makes me want ever so much to help you. I wish you would let me."

"No one can help me—no one wants to!" Jane sighed pathetically. "I was foolish, and brought it all on my own head. But I shan't live—that is my only comfort. I feel that I shall die, which is the best that can happen to such as me."

"If your baby lives, you should wish to live to care for it. It would be a very lonely little creature without its mother."

"Without a father, what chance will it have in life? And how should I support it?"

" 'It's a poor hen that can't scratch for one chicken'," quoted Judy. "You will grow strong and find work."

But Jane buried her face in the bedclothes and wept piteously. "I—I won't be allowed the chance!—I—have a bitter enemy—against whom I am powerless to fight!"

"Alone, yes. But if I help you to fight him?"

"How can you help me?"

"If you tell me all—*all* that is troubling you, I would try my hardest to help. Two heads are better than one, you know."

Jane sobbed on, but there were signs of relenting.

"I am threatened with a terrible disaster—and it is so unfair! God has forsaken me! I am innocent—yet I can be made to appear guilty of—of—Hubert Kennedy's murder, for I have no witness to clear me—none!"

"How is that?" asked Judy sympathetically.

"There is a man—a native—who swears that he will say he *saw me do it* when he knows he did it himself," cried Jane pantingly. "I saw him!—with my dying breath I would swear to it. But it would be his word against mine; and who would believe mine when they know the relations that existed between Hubert and me, and will think I was mad with jealousy! But I never did it! I could not have dared!"

"I am convinced of that, Jane. But if you saw this native do it, why not risk it and say so?" (Judy was surprised to find how accurately Mr. Stanley had judged the case.)

"Because he says I haven't a chance. He is ready to make up a story about it, and can anyone tell what the verdict will be?" Jane shivered from head to foot. "He keeps coming for money—I have given him all I have, yet he threatens me that

if I don't give him more, and more, he will give information to the police, and I shall be taken into custody."

Judy's heart thrilled at the way things were working together for the detective's schene.

"When is he coming again to threaten you, Jane?"

"He said he will come at eleven to-morrow morning. He comes with a tailor's bundle as he is supposed to be making clothes for the 'event' I am expecting. But that is not so. I could not pay for clothes and am trying to make all myself. He is coming to take money which I said I could not give him. But he believes it is a lie and says if I don't give him at least twenty rupees to-morrow, he will go straight to the police station."

"What a dreadful man!"

"He is cunning and clever—and means to see me hanged for the crime, when *I saw him do it!*"

"Tell me all you saw," said Judy. "I am going to help you through this, Jane, so don't be so frightened."

When Jane was a little more composed, she told her story.

"When Hubert threw me down for coming in his way that night, I saw this man dart out from behind a door on the landing and plunge a knife into his master's back. Hubert then fell through the door—which burst open—and I fainted.

When I came to, a few minutes later, all was silent, only the bearer and I were in the drawing-room with your door open and Hubert lying on his face so still and dead. I did not know then that he was dead; I thought I could get a doctor and save him, but when I stooped and examined him, he was lifeless. I turned upon the man and called him a murderer and said he would hang for what he had done. But he laughed in my face and asked who was to prove it. He was ready to swear that it was my doing, and it would be only my word against his. He looked so vindictive and determined that I was terrified; and when he demanded money to hold his tongue, I gave it to him. Ever since then, he has been coming for money to be silent, and now that I have nothing left, he is going to hand me over. Oh, my God! they will hang me, for how can I prove I am innocent!" She wrung her hands and wept. "I went back twice—stole in by a back way for the sake of looking for anything to prove that Ali Bux had done the murder—but failed. There was nothing!"

"Jane—I have a plan," said Judy, deeply excited. "We have got to make him admit he did it. If he believes he is alone with you and that no one is listening, he might explain to you his motive for taking Hubert's life. Ask him why he did it. Say you want to know for your own satisfaction what made him stab his master towards whom he had every reason to be grateful——"

"But that's just it! Hubert treated him horribly."

"Don't let him think you believed such a thing. Let him justify himself—and I shall hide somewhere in the room and be a witness to what he says."

"Do you think that could be done?"

"I am sure of it."

"Do you understand the language?"

Judy remembered and was obliged to acknowledge her ignorance; for the moment was in despair, for there would be no use in Jane's making Ali Bux admit his guilt, unless some one could be a witness to the admission. And to tell her of Mr. Stanley, *the detective*, would throw her into a state of agitation that would make her ill.

"I could bring someone to our help," she said, at length. "I have made friends with one of the lodgers—the man who came to your assistance the night you took the wrong medicine. He might consent to listen while you talk to Ali Bux, if he can be hidden somewhere in here."

"How could we tell him anything? What would he understand of it? I cannot bear to let anyone know of it! No one here, not even my aunt and cousin, has any idea that I am connected with this case."

"They would all know if the police came after you."

"Oh, you alarm me!—I could give Ali Bux my

mother's jewels—they are old-fashioned and valuable. Perhaps he would consent never to trouble me any more, once he understood he has all I can give him. I was thinking of doing this."

"You are too much in his power already. Giving him hush-money is putting yourself in the position of one who is guilty. Let me manage this for you."

"Where could I hide anyone in this room?" Jane cried, despairingly.

"What about the bathroom?"

"Ali Bux always satisfies himself, before he says a word about money, that there is no possibility of anyone being hidden in there. He goes right in. If I had a hanging cupboard, he would look inside. But I have only a chest of drawers and one trunk——"

"Couldn't you have a counterpane hanging low?"

"He would look underneath."

Judy felt beaten; Mr. Stanley's plan seemed impossible under the circumstances. So she wished Jane good night and retired to consult the detective.

He was waiting for her in the hall, and Judy was sure, as they consulted together, that Emmeline would conclude they were starting a love affair, for Emmeline's ideas ran in a groove, and love intrigues filled her romantic imagination.

When Judy had told him of her success with

Jane, and then of the impossibility of his finding a spot in the room in which to hide, he was not daunted.

"What about her trunk? Get to her in the morning and empty her trunk. It is a big one with a round top, and I shall hide inside with the lid sufficiently lifted to allow me, both to see and hear."

Judy was amazed at his resourcefulness. So they could try the experiment after all!

CHAPTER XVII

TO THE RESCUE

JUDY woke early in the morning full of excitement and anticipation, and longing for the moment to arrive when they would be able to unmask the treacherous rascal who was preying on Jane Gomez. If they could only prove beyond all doubt—by his own confession, made while he thought he was free to speak without reserve—that he was guilty, all suspense would be at an end, and, for poor Jane, it would henceforward be joy and peace.

After breakfast, Judy found Jane in a state bordering on nervous prostration at the prospect of the ordeal before her of another of those distressing visits from Ali Bux. She sat in an easy chair at her bedside holding an old-fashioned leather jewel-case in her hands, weeping over treasures which had been handed down in her family for generations. Portuguese ancestors and Indian ancestresses had gathered some fine gems in their time, and a few had come into Jane's possession to be passed on by her to her heirs, and it was like tearing the heart out of her breast to give

them up. Yet, so miserable had she become with fear and helplessness in the hands of the clever rogue and bully, that she was prepared to pay the price to be free again—if Ali Bux would go and never show his face to her again.

"They are quite beautiful," said Judy, holding up a chain and pendant which was in the shape of a Maltese cross and full of precious stones. Another trinket, which proved to be a heavy brooch shaped like a cobra coiled on its own tail with diamond eyes and a body studded with rubies, fascinated her. Long earrings, too, like golden bells with diamond drops hanging from a chain within, were remarkable pieces of jewelry.

"They are all I have, and it breaks my heart—but anything is better than living in the crater of a volcano which might, at any moment, break out and swallow me up. Where, then, would be the use of these?"

"I know what it is to endure suspense and fear," said Judy, "but put these things away and listen to me."

When Jane's attention was hers, she unfolded Mr. Stanley's plan. The trunk would have to be emptied for his occupation the minute before the tailor was in the room—slightly open, so that he could see and hear while Jane encouraged the man to give himself away. "You must draw him out, Jane," she advised, and explained, again, how best to do it.

Jane's interest was captured; she even recovered some courage. But, before they were quite ready with the trunk, an ayah announced the fact that the "Baba's *darzie*" was waiting in the hall below.

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Jane, her hand flying to her heart. "He is here!"

"Steady!" smiled Judy. "Tell her he must wait —that you are not ready to receive him, for he is earlier than his appointment."

Jane translated the message and the ayah retired.

Judy, thereupon, ran to Mr. Stanley's door and knocked, but received no answer. She knocked again, and Mrs. Smith put her head out of her room with a frown to ask what Mrs. Sherman wanted with the lodger.

Everything seemed to be going wrong!

"I have something to tell him," said Judy.

"He has not returned from out. He alvays goes out at this time."

The time was half-past ten—half an hour before he expected the tailor! Oh, what would happen!

As Judy turned away, Mrs. Smith's head disappeared and Emmeline's voice could be heard saying —"My! the vay she runs after him!—and she, not his sort, neither!"

Judy felt in a panic. Jane was depending on her —the whole plan depended on Mr. Stanley—and he was not here! *But the tailor was*! And peeping down into the hall from the top of the shabby stairs, she could see the dark bearded Mohammedan

squatting beside his bundle on the floor, waiting for permission to go to Jane. On no account must she reveal herself, or he might remember her, and there was no knowing how he would behave. He might change his tactics—retire and come another day when he was not expected. Judy anxiously paced the empty hall which lay between the bedrooms, unable to think what she should do. Suddenly, footsteps sounded on the stairs. If it should be the tailor, their plans were routed!

But she remembered that natives of his class did not wear shoes inside a Sahib's house, and the footsteps were shoes on the uncarpeted boards.

With intense relief, she saw that it was Mr. Stanley, walking with the utmost leisure.

"He is here!" she whispered, with reference to the Indian.

"I have seen him," he replied with a smile.

"Everything is ready. I was terrified that you wouldn't return in time!"

"Sheer instinct brought me home. I had a feeling that I must return at once—one has intuitions of the sort sometimes. Otherwise I should have come back a little later."

Again Mrs. Smith's face appeared at her door, and, over her shoulder Emmeline's, peeping curiously.

"Can I do anything for you, Mrs. Smith?" asked Mr. Stanley.

"No thank you. I was onlee vondering vot

there was to make so much tok about, that's all." And her head was withdrawn indignantly.

"Inquisitive but well-meaning people!" said Mr. Stanley. "They have no suspicion of what is afoot, and will receive a terrible shock, presently. Does Jane understand what she has to do?"

"She understands, but has no self-confidence. That man has a terrifying influence on her. The knowledge that he has no conscience, is absolutely unscrupulous, and would see her hanged, unmoved by shame or remorse for his cruelty, makes her weak and helpless. I only hope she won't break down and faint at the critical moment, for, then, all will be lost."

"In such an event, we'll risk it, then, and take him into custody, hoping by some means to extract confession."

"You'll get nothing out of him. He has only to stick to his point to win. Poor Jane!"

"Now—let's see what Jane has to say."

Judy took the detective into Jane's room and was greatly encouraged by her reception of him. Her ignorance of his official capacity, helped matters along, for she had faith in the voluntary aid of friends, whereas, she would have had none in a member of the police force who, to her, were merely police officials, and cogs in the wheel of a great national machine.

When everything was satisfactory in Jane's room for the reception of Ali Bux, Judy called the ayah

and told her to send the tailor to the Miss Baba who was ready to see him, and went downstairs to the sitting-room where she beguiled the time with the morning paper—reading patiently through the columns of "Wanteds" for a job that would take her home to England without expense to herself, or keep her employed and able to pay her way. She would not allow her thoughts to dwell on Larry's desertion of her, or she would have no courage to live her life.

Suddenly, her eyes fell on the following advertisement:

"WANTED: A young lady to take charge of a little boy of five. Must be prepared to join at once. Call personally at 15, WARREN SQUARE, Barrackpur. Good salary to suitable person."

Her heart leapt with hope. The very thing! She would call that very day!

While she was studying the advertisement with eager excitement, a shrill whistle was blown sharply, thrice in succession, and she leapt to her feet. But, a little retrospect will be necessary.

II

The black-bearded Mohammedan "*darzi*" came softly up the rickety stairs, stepping like a panther, carrying his bundle slung over his shoulder. On his head he wore an embroidered muslin skull cap. A linen tunic clothed his body,

a muslin *dhoti* showed below and draped his naked legs.

Arrived outside the Miss Baba's door, he coughed, which, to a servant, is equivalent to a knock on the panels.

A weak voice answered the cough with permission to enter, and he lifted the curtain hanging in the doorway, to pass in. Before he did so, however, he cast a swift glance up and down the hall to see if anyone was about, and then let himself into the room, closed the door, and deposited his bundle on the floor.

As he faced Jane, he made a low salaam with a great deal of mockery in it, while he asked in Hindustani if her health had improved.

"I am as well as I can hope to be, Ali Bux," said Jane tremulously, while her fingers shook over the needlework she was attempting to continue. "I wonder when you will ever leave me in peace," she said, while he glanced suspiciously about the room.

"Times are hard, *Baba*, and a man must live. Is there anyone in the next room who might hear through the door?" he asked cautiously.

"You can open it and look," said she, wearily.

Ali Bux took her at her word, and, unbolting the door, looked into Mr. Stanley's room searchingly.

"It is vacant," he said withdrawing his head. "Whoever lodges in it, is away. I will look in the bathroom as it is more satisfactory to know that

no inquisitive ears are listening to my talk," said he, next, moving like a cat over the floor and peering into the bathroom. "It is well," said he. "I will now say what I came to say—" he cleared his throat and squatted on his haunches, his knees under his chin in the attitude favored, generally, by natives of the East. "How much has the *Baba* saved for me, this visit?"

"I have no money, Ali Bux. You know that, and yet you torment me."

"There are always ways of obtaining money. The *Baba* must have jewels she can sell."

"I have nothing—nothing!" said Jane falteringly.

"With *Baba's* permission, I will search the drawers and box, and, peradventure, I shall find all I want."

Jane's face blanched and her eyes flew instinctively towards the large trunk with its ill-fitting lid.

"Why must you persecute me, bearer. Don't you know that all this is killing me? What have I done to be tormented in this way? I promise never to tell anyone about what I saw that night. You are safe—you are free. Doesn't that content you? How much worse if you had to hide from the police?"

"Why should I hide from the police when it is you who have reason to hide. Did I kill Kennedy Sahib?"

"What is the use of talking like that, Ali Bux? You know, and I know, that *you* did it."

"Ha!" said he with attempt to bluster. "What for these statements? Has sickness turned your brain, *Baba*, that you, now try to fix the crime on me? Haven't you been paying me regularly to keep the truth silent? and haven't I done so faithfully? *Ai Allah*! but the *Baba* is, indeed, ill—she sees hallucinations if she will tell Ali Bux, to his face, that he did the deed for which she is guilty! *Ai, Allah*!"

"Ali Bux!" Jane tried to speak with dignity. "What is this new idea? You have never denied, when we are alone, that you did it? Why try to pretend about it when you and I are face to face and there is no secret between us regarding the true facts? You know you struck the Sahib in the back after he threw me down. I was on the floor when it happened. And, afterwards, when I returned to consciousness——"

"That was so," grinned the bearer. "The *Baba* dreamed a dream while she was unconscious—forgetting that it was her hand that struck the blow. I was there, so the *Baba*, now, would make out it was Ali Bux! *Ai, Allah*!"

Jane looked at him despairingly, for he spoke with such assurance. "What is your object in saying all this?" she asked him. "You know you are lying. There are no witnesses—yet you keep it up? Surely you don't hope to

make me doubt the evidence of my own eyes?"

"Think and say what you like, *Baba*! After all, what does it matter so long as I am paid regularly to keep my mouth shut concerning the truth."

"It is not the truth!" she cried hysterically. "You know it is not the truth!" In her helplessness to cope with the rascal, Jane was on the verge of bursting into tears. She looked agitated and faint, and again cast an appealing glance, in all ingenuousness at the trunk.

The latter occupied a corner and looked as though too full to close down tightly, while from one end some clothes protruded.

"*Tcha*! Let it go! The *Baba* is ill and I will not argue. I have very little time to waste. How about the jewels? Baba has, surely, jewels? A trifle or so—things that can be sold for money? I will search and the *Baba* will sit still in her seat."

"Stay awhile, Ali Bux! I will not allow you to touch my property."

"Say nothing. Why grow excited? I must have money—if not money, then jewels. If *Baba* will not give to me, I will take, and if she makes a noise, then I go to police *thana* and say—'I have found the guilty one. She is living in that white brick house with a green gate in'—oh, I know what to do! have no fear of Ali Bux making mistakes! *Baba* will go to prison, and then—" he made a strangling sound in his throat, with the sign of a

rope tightening round the neck, and Jane lay back, white and hopeless.

"Ali Bux, if I give you all my jewels, will you tell me something—something I have greatly wanted to know? It won't hurt you to tell me," she said unconscious that she was using extraordinary tact and clever strategy to gain her point. Desperation was making her ill and faint.

"What jewels has the *Baba* got to give, when but a moment since she said she had none?" he asked craftily.

"I have a few valuables, things my mother left to me. I will give you all I have if you will never trouble me again, and will tell me this thing I want to know."

"Show them to me," he said suspiciously.

Jane put her hand beneath her pillow and drew out an old leather jewel-case which she opened.

Ali Bux rose from the ground and bent forward to gaze into the box. "There is heavy weight of gold there," he said covetously, "I see precious stones, too. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds! The settings are of years gone by. Such brooches are not worn," he went on, half to himself, while his fingers itched to take each article in his hand and inspect it closely, "but there is a high price paid by antique dealers for jewels of that quality and workmanship. Did your mother have lots of money?"

"She had money and lands, but lost all," said Jane wearily.

"Give me the box as it is—I will be content to leave you alone for ever when the treasures are mine."

"I will let you take them when you have told me what I want to know."

"Why should I bargain with you, *Baba*? It is for me to demand and you to concede."

"I have conceded much. But the jewels I shall hold on to and bequeath to my cousin when I am dead. I shall not live to be hanged for your crime, Ali Bux. All this is killing me. I shall die soon. One day I shall be found dead in my bed. I cannot bear the strain of your visits any more, and if the police come and take me for the crime you committed, I'll not live to stand on my defense."

Ali Bux eyed the wan face, the evidence of coming travail, and shifted on his feet. The jewels enticed him. He could not bear to lose the chance of possessing them. "What is it you want me to tell?"

"Just the truth. Did you intend to kill Kennedy Sahib that night, or was it done on the impulse?"

"If it had been on the impulse, would I have had the big knife of the dining-table hidden on me?"

"Then you meant to take his life? But why?"—

He cast a furtive glance around, and, finally, looked with fascinated gaze on the jewels which lay exposed in the open box.

"Three times in that week he had beaten me for

things that were lost," he began reluctantly. "He abused me and called me a vile name. He insulted my religion. When he was drunk, before the bride from *Belait* came to wed him, he cut short my beard—he and his friends, just to make entertainment for themselves, and to punish me for forgetting an order. All these things gathered in my mind. I said to myself—" Ali Bux's voice hardened, malice showed in his crafty, black eyes, his white teeth gleamed—"I said, 'You will pay one day with your life!' Yet I did nothing, for he was careless with his money, and I, being a poor man, found my situation too advantageous to leave. I stayed; money has its uses. Then he fixed the day of his marriage, and gave me a week's notice to look for another place, for his lady did not know the language, and he wanted one who could speak his own tongue with ease and facility so as to make things pleasant for her. It was then I took my revenge."

"Why did you wait till he rose from his bed? You could have killed him while he lay helpless and sleeping?"

"You were watching, and would have run from the room screaming to rouse all the house. So I waited. Then, when he used his violence on you, and threatened his bride, I felt that that was the time to kill. My blood rose to fever heat within me crying out—'Kill!—Kill!' All my soul yearned to shed his blood. So I did it." His eyes glittered

with triumph. "With the big knife for carving meat, I did it. Art satisfied that I have spoken? Now give me the jewels and I will go." He held out his hand.

"Yes, I am well satisfied, Ali Bux," she answered hysterically. "I am thankful to God that, with your own lips you have told us why, and how, you did it!"

"*Us*?" He bent towards her menacingly, his fingers like talons threatening to grip her throat. "You said '*us*'?"

"Yes," she cried joyfully, "you are not so clever but others can be clever, too! You have, at last, confessed to the truth, Ali Bux!"

There was a sudden movement at the end of the room where stood the round-top trunk, and Ali Bux saw the lid spring backwards and a man leap out. The next moment he flung up his hands for the muzzle of a revolver was pointing straight at his chest.

"Stay quite still," said Mr. Stanley. "I arrest you for the wilful murder of Hubert Kennedy, and warn you that——"

Jane heard no more, for she swooned. She was deaf to the shrill whistles, and blind to the fact that her aunt, Emmeline, and Judy rushed into the room followed shortly afterwards by two constables who handcuffed Ali Bux and led him away.

III

The doctor arrived later, and by and by, that same evening, a nurse, for Jane was suddenly so seriously ill that her life hung on a thread.

At midnight, Judy was informed by Mrs. Smith with a candle in her hand, that Jane's troubles were all over.

"Is she dead?" asked Judy solemnly; for the only trouble she could think of in connection with Jane, was the burden of living with so much against her.

"No. But the child is. It was born dead, and now she vill do vell. She is asking for you. 'Mrs. Kennerdee,' she said. Is that your name?"

"Yes," said Judy, shamefacedly. "I should like to tell you all about myself." Which she did, before going to Jane.

"Goodness gracious, Emmerline!" Mrs. Smith said to her daughter, a moment later, scarcely able to contain the news: "She's the 'Missing Bride' wot the police were looking for! Ve'll all be in the newspapers now!"

"My!—wot it is to be famous, for our Jane was suspected of the murder of Hubert Kennedy when it was the native who did it!"

"I suppose they vill photograph the house and it vill become so vell known that ve'll have more boders than we can take!" said Mrs. Smith with an eye to the main chance.

IV

Meanwhile, Jane was holding Judy's hand and kissing it with servile gratitude. "Oh, you have been so good to me! But for you I should have been taken a prisoner, or I should have died!"

"The plan was Mr. Stanley's—he's a detective, you know," Judy explained.

"A detective? Was he here for me?"

"He was here to catch the murderer, and succeeded through your cleverness and pluck."

"Oh, I am so thankful!"

"We didn't tell you because you were so nervous."

"I am glad I did not know! I think I shall now sleep for days and weeks! I am so tired and happy —do you think me heartless to be happy when my little baby was born dead?"

"I think reaction from the strain of your suspense and dread must make you happy even though the baby never lived. Besides, considering its father, it is best dead."

"Things happen for the best in the end," sighed Jane preparing to sleep.

CHAPTER XVIII

JUDY'S JOB

TWO days later, when the papers were ringing with the arrest of Kennedy's murderer, Larry, who was on the point of leaving his room at the hotel for a luncheon engagement with a new friend, was stopped on the threshold with the news that a lady was asking for him.

For a moment his heart stood still as he made up his mind on the spot that it could be none other than Judy; but it was Josephine who ran into view, looking dusty and travel-stained, too impatient for him to come down to her. In answer to his look of surprise, she entered and closed the door.

"I thought it best to catch you up in your room as I had so much to say of importance that can't be shouted from the house-top," she said, embracing him.

Greetings over, she asked for news of Judy. "I have to beg her forgiveness about a letter she entrusted to me for you the night she left Panighat. I put it under my pillow at Billy's, and forgot all about it till I returned to camp at Jamunghur. Then I remembered it and wrote asking Billy for

it. But the beds had been stripped and the letter was nowhere to be found. I felt so horrible about it that I said nothing to you—I didn't even dare to tell Judy. Besides, what was the good, if she was married as I thought, to that bounder. So I let it go——"

"You had a letter for *me* from Judy and never delivered it?" Thus Larry, who could think of nothing else.

"It was lost, dear boy. But it turned up yesterday—you wouldn't believe where! In my night-dress-case in which it has lain all this time. The case was under my pillow at Panighat, and I must have slipped the letter in there when I imagined I was putting it under my pillow. That careless ayah of mine has handled it a dozen times and never asked me what letter I had hidden away there. It was no business of hers, so, she says, she took no notice of it. Well—I felt so bad about it that I had to come and tell you both, and beg forgiveness. Here it is."

Larry took it from her and slipped it into his pocket, his face looking grim and discouraging.

"Where is Judy?"

"I don't know," said he.

"But surely you rescued her?"

"No."

"Larry, what's the meaning of this?"

"Haven't we parted for good and all?" he said roughly.

"I believed so till you wrote that the police were on another scent and had no use for you or Judy. I made sure, then, that you had taken her away from that brute, seeing that he never married her after all."

Larry started. "Never married her? You told me in that letter I received at this hotel a few days ago that she had gone with Dallas and that they were to be married on arrival in Calcutta—this, to save the dangerous situation he had created. I had begged her to have nothing to do with Dallas no matter what idea she had in her head concerning his power to injure us—but she allowed him to work on her fears and cleared out with him, for which I have given him the soundest thrashing he has had in his life."

"I heard so!—but he was *ill*!"

"He was as well as you or I."

"He had barely recovered from ptomaine poisoning!"

"How do you know all this?" Larry asked astonished.

"Judy wrote me a short letter in which she told me that she had been saved from Richard Dallas by a miracle from God. The brute had refused to marry her when they arrived in Calcutta, and took her straight to his flat under the threat of *your* arrest, if she refused to go with him. However, on their arrival, he became suddenly ill with symptoms of ptomaine poisoning owing to something he had

eaten, and had to have a doctor at once. Judy says he nearly died. They had to get a nurse for him, who was there up to the moment before you burst into the flat. In fact, the nurse had scarcely left when you came in and gave him the beating he so richly deserved. Judy's main reason in writing was, to tell me that she had left Dallas, thanking God for her escape."

"Jo!—oh, Jo!" Larry looked sick as he fell into a seat. "Is that true? Can you swear to it?"

"Of course, my dear. I have the letter here."

She drew it from her handbag and gave it to him, watching him as he devoured the contents.

"Oh, what have I done!——" Larry cursed himself and sprang to his feet.

"What's wrong?"

"I have been a damned fool—a mad, egotistical prig! God!—and my poor little girl needing me so! Where is she now?—How shall I find her?"

"Explain what you mean?" cried Jo, shaking him by the shoulders. "Don't act like a lunatic."

Larry explained, incoherently, what he had done.

"I left that coward's flat after hammering him, and also left Judy to her own resources, thinking she was his wife. But she was not!—It seems she was my own little sweetheart all the time! I heard, afterwards, from Bolton that Dallas was in hospital and his flat shut up, so, God knows where she has gone! Judy was with a man—a common fellow at

a restaurant, only yesterday; but I wouldn't notice her. What has she been thinking of me!—and where is she? Jo! She can have little or no money! How is she managing?" He was distracted with anxiety and distress. He had turned his back on her, friendless in that Oriental city—leaving her at the mercy of anyone who offered to save her from starvation! "My God! I shall go mad!" He snatched up his hat and was starting, at once, to look for her when Jo brought him to his senses.

"You might spend twenty-four hours of every day roaming the streets of Calcutta looking for Judy, but if you don't know where she is living you are likely to miss her every time. Apply to the police. They probably know where to find her. They are perfect bloodhounds. I would not be surprised if they have had their eye on her from the moment Dallas brought her to Calcutta. The police detectives work secretly—even Billy might easily have been kept in the dark as to the fact that they have been nosing around even as far as Panighat and Jamunghur. I wouldn't put it beyond them to have known all your movements from the beginning. So, go straight to the police."

The advice was sound, and Larry decided to adopt it. In the meantime, Josephine had to be provided with a room in the hotel, and he had to read Judy's pathetic letter of farewell which had lain so many days in Jo's nightdress-case!

II

Larry shed tears over Judy's sad letter of renunciation in which she explained that her love for him had made her willing to commit any sacrifice to save him from the dread consequences of sharing her misfortunes—though he had already shared them bravely and unselfishly! She begged of him to save himself, now, without any thought of her to hamper him. As Dallas's wife, she would be comparatively safe from identification, and trying to be happy in the thought that her beloved Larry was no longer in any danger. Seeking safety together, could only have been ruin to both. It did not matter what happened to her.

"Larry!—I shall always love you—I shall always think of you. If I could only have been your wife, I should have wanted no better heaven. But my own folly, in the first instance, has brought about my life-long misery and ruin. Forgive your little Judy for bringing you sorrow, and if it will help you to be happy, forget her, even if it means loving someone else. Only, I pray I may never see you again, for how shall I live—how bear the thought of another's gain and my loss!

"Good-bye, my dear, beloved boy—I hope and pray I shall not live if it means that I shall always suffer as I am suffering now. Good-bye!"

Larry left Jo to call on her friends in town, and was about to hail a taxi to take him to the police

station, when Tony arrived by hackney carriage, out of which he stepped in front of the hotel, almost running into his friend.

"Just the man I wanted to see," said Tony. "I have been trying to get cheap lodgings, but hanged if Calcutta is not full to bursting."

"What has brought you to town?"

"I met Billy, in camp near Jamunghur. It seems, they have heard, secretly, that the man who murdered Kennedy is caught, or practically caught—and the wonderful part of it is, that it isn't yourself they are after—nor Judy! I thought, if you didn't know it, already, you should; so I came along to stop your getting passports. I didn't know where to look for you—was in despair till—here you are! What luck!"

"You're awfully good to come all this way for that! But I found that out for myself, old man."

"There was nothing much doing, so I thought I might just as well come along. I am dam' sorry to hear about—Judy, and would like, greatly, to lay Dallas out. I know why she did it!—you know, too—pity we didn't hear sooner about this!"

Tony had much to learn, so Larry took him into the hotel, and told him, over their drinks, of all that had happened since they parted. Judy had not married Dallas, and nothing but an intervention of Providence had saved her from the scoundrel. However, Dallas was now in hospital with

plenty of time to repent of meddling in Larry Straughan's affairs, but Judy—Judy was alone—somewhere—he had yet to discover where!

"I was wondering what was happening," said Tony sheepishly. "I thought if you had started for Bombay and she was married but unhappy with Dallas, I'd offer to take her home—I have just about enough saved to do it—that is, if she would consent. She cares for you, Straughan, more than anything in life. So it seemed to me a rotten waste of lives for you two to live apart now that it is all serene about that other ghastly business."

"It is great of you, Tony! I'll not forget that in a hurry. Only let me find her!"

"We've got to, without loss of time!" They both rose to proceed with the task of looking for her.

"God knows what she is doing without friends!"

"And the worst of it is, she can't have much money on her!"

The idea of a beautiful girl being, practically, lost and stranded in a city like Calcutta, without money and friends, at the mercy of every rascal out to pick up beauty in distress, made Larry's blood run cold, and Tony went to scour every house in every street, to find her.

"I am going straight to the police station after I have met my friend and told him that lunch is off as far as I am concerned," said Larry.

"I am coming with you, if I may?"

"I shall be glad if you do, for I might not have the luck I hope for."

"What a jolly good thing that native devil has been caught. It makes it so much more comfortable for all concerned," said Tony.

"Except himself!—I don't suppose there can be any loophole for his escape."

"Let us hope not."

III

An hour later, when Mrs. Smith was crossing the hall in slippers and a dressing-gown, she caught sight of a taxi at her gate and two well-dressed young men stepping out.

"My! Emmerline, come quick!" she cried in a shrill voice that had a penetrating quality. "There are two gents at the gate—see wot they vant. If they ask for rooms, remember that Mrs. Kennerdee's room is vacant."

Emmeline came downstairs two steps at a time. The word "gents" conveyed so many potentialities for romantic adventure, that she could not waste a moment to glance in the mirror to discover if the powder on her face had melted as it had a way of doing in the heat.

"Ma!" she exclaimed, peeping round the door, "what swells!—I hope they want bode and lodging!"

"Sur*lee* they can't be looking for rooms!" said

Mrs. Smith, peeping over her shoulder. "I vish I was properlee dressed!"

"They are coming in! Am I all right, Ma?"

"You'll do, onlee there is a patch of powder on your nose."

"Everee one puts powder on the nose. Even Mrs. Kennerdee."

"But not like that! It is like a tombstone!"

Emmeline passed her handkerchief over the spot and her mother disappeared as Larry and Tony came up the front steps.

"I am told Mrs. Kennedy lives here," said Larry lifting his hat.

"She *has been* living here," said Emmeline self-consciously. "But, to-day, she went." (Which was a literal translation of Hindustani in which language she and her mother could be eloquent.)

"Can you tell us where she has gone?"

"I donno. All I kno' is, that she's got a job; but Ma may be able to say. Ma!" she raised her voice and received a reply from behind the door of the sitting-room. "Vhere has Mrs. Kennerdee gone?"

"Goodness knows! She up and vent this morning taking her bag in her hand. I heard her give Jane an address, but I have forgotten."

"Let me ask Jane, my cousin," said Emmeline graciously. "Meantime, von't you come in and sit down?"

Larry thought he could just as easily stand on the doorstep, and Tony was of the same opinion, discouraged by the look of the decayed grass matting and cobwebs clinging at the corners of the ceiling.

However, Emmeline did not keep them waiting long. She returned after a renewed application of the powder-puff to her face, saying that Mrs. Kennerdee had got a situation somewhere, Jane did not remember where, but would remember to ask when the 'ladee' came to see her.

Larry and Tony exchanged looks of distress.

"Can you give me no idea, at all, where I shall be able to look for her?" the former asked.

"She promised she would call, after she was settled, to see Jane who is her friend," said Emmeline.

"Oh—if she does, will you say I called? This is my card and the hotel at which I am staying. Will you be so kind as to drop me a line when you know her correct address?"

Emmeline promised, faithfully, to do so, and saw the two "gents" off the premises with her best company smile.

When they had driven away, Emmeline rushed into the sitting-room full of excitement. Had her mother ever seen such beautiful creatures? The one who had done all the talking, was the handsomest ever! in fact, she had never seen his like

outside the pages of the "Family Herald," or "Young Ladies' Journal." What a figure! What eyes! What a——

"That will do," warned her mother. "It's as far as you'll get with gentlemen of that sort, just you make up your mind to that, Emmerline, I'll have no mo' philandering with handsome swells like Jane did—with the same result! No. They are not your kind, and you are not theirs. Mrs. Kennerdee is, I can see with half an eye. And don't you make a mistake and say she is Jane's *friend*. She may be a friend *to* Jane, but that is another pair of shoes, entirely. So, the less you get your sillee head turned by handsome gents who happen to come your way, the better for us all."

IV

Larry and Tony returned to the hotel considerably depressed in spirits, having communicated their lack of success to the police, who promised to let Mr. Straughan know the instant Judy wrote informing them of her change of address, which she was bound to do, since she would be wanted when the trial of Ali Bux came up for hearing.

Meanwhile, Judy, all unconscious, found distraction in her situation as governess to a delicate little boy who was not able to go to school, and would shortly be sent to England. All her belongings were recovered from Dallas's flat by her new

friends who had been told, from the first, the history of her misfortunes; so that she was, once again, surrounded by refinement and comfort, daily intending to call and see Jane, yet shrinking from visiting that ill-kept abode of Eurasians in a northern slum, and thus reviving its miserable recollections.

The meeting between herself and Larry took place a week after she joined her situation,—a day after the return of Jo and Tony to their respective factories; and it happened this wise—

Larry, who had spent his days haunting shops and every conceivable place where women usually were to be found, but without success, accepted an invitation, through one of his new friends, to dine at a house at Barrackpur. Though, at this time, he was out of tune with society, he allowed himself, on this occasion, in sheer desperation, to seek diversion lest he should court a nervous breakdown.

Ballad, his friend, thought he would like to know the Blythes who were delightful people, and insisted. Afterwards, Larry believed it was fate that had made him yield.

Blythe was a colonel in the Black Watch on a staff appointment in Calcutta, and preferred to live at Barrackpur where he and his wife had many friends, and were extremely popular. Larry had met Mrs. Blythe at the Saturday Club and, having refused too many of her invitations, felt he would

have to put in an appearance at her house, this time, or be, forever, voted a bore.

When he entered the drawing-room, it was so full of guests, that he was not aware at the moment that Judy was among them—seated on a sofa near a group of palms with two young men—a rose between two thorns.

The Blythes treated her as one of themselves; not as an upper servant. And their friends, taking the cue from host and hostess, paid Judy plenty of attentions; not only because she was a lady, but because she was the most discussed of any woman in Calcutta owing to her connection with the Kennedy case; also, her manners were unaffected and charming, and to know her was to admire her. Few, however, realized that her smile was the least natural thing about her and, generally, made to order, or that, behind it, was an unceasing heartache.

When she saw Larry, of all people, enter, she was afraid she was going to faint. Mercifully, the two young men were too full of themselves and the comic anecdotes they vied with each other to relate, for them to notice her sudden pallor and closed eyes; which gave her time to recover.

Using all her will-power, Judy faced the situation, telling herself that she was nothing to Larry, so, in her very pride must be brave and show him she did not mind. Just when she had brought herself to the point of acknowledging the inevitable

introduction, their eyes met and he forgot everything in the spontaneousness of his delight.

"It's *Judy*!" he cried, his whole face transformed for the world to know his joy. "Judy!" saying which, he strode across to her and took both her hands in his. "I have searched all Calcutta for you—and to think that I should meet you here!" Then remembering where he was, he apologized to his hostess who had followed at his elbow. "Judy and I have had many adventures," he explained with a boyish blush, "but, somehow, managed to lose each other!" It did not matter what rumor was doing with their names—that was for later, and more exhaustive explanations. For the present he had no intention to waste words while Judy waited before him, all atremble, the color coming and going in her cheeks.

"Larry!—what a surprise!" was all she could murmur. As the dinner bell rang there was no time for much more, but Larry crushed her fingers in his before turning to seek his partner, and Judy's whole being glowed happily.

Thereafter, an hour passed in a confused whirl, for both, amid a hum and buzz of conversation. Judy did her best to attend to her dinner partner's conversation, but with poor success, for her eyes constantly strayed across the table to where Larry was seated, trying, like herself, to pin his thoughts to the amenities of the moment. Every time their eyes met, there was such a world of secret joy in

the meeting, such a promise of happiness to come, that Judy's mind was chaotic with hopes and gladness. What had happened to bring this wonderful change to pass? she asked herself over and over again. She could not answer it, but was content to leave it to be answered by Larry himself.

After dinner he came straight to her and whispered for her ear alone, "I must speak to you, Judy. Where?"

"Shall we go into the verandah?" she replied tremulously.

As they were on the threshold of the verandah and almost within the lace curtains draping the doorway, it was not a conspicuous act for them to desert the company and walk away together to a part where lights were dim and the moon played a sympathetic part in their reconciliation.

V

"Shouldn't we return to the drawing-room?" Judy asked coming, at last, to a sense of time. "We are behaving very badly, Larry!"

"Darling! I suppose we are, but I cannot be parted from you any longer. Let us marry tomorrow!"

"Just as soon as you like," she returned happily, all troubles chased away with Paradise in sight.

"And you have forgiven me for making that mistake?"

"I don't blame you. How were you to know I was not married to *him*?" The name "Dallas" was so hateful to both that it was unmentionable.

"I have been the most wretched being in the world," he told her. "Married to *him*, you seemed lost to me for ever! Otherwise, I might have tried to get you back."

"Would you have wanted me back if——" It was unthinkable, that IF!

"Wanted you, Judy, sweetheart? I wanted you, any way, only, I knew it was useless if you were married! Oh, it hurt like sin, losing you that way! But it is all, now, done with! Don't let us think of it again."

"Why did you try to give yourself up for a crime you did not commit?" she asked reproachfully.

"I felt that, sooner or later, such a scoundrel would turn on you, even though you were in another part of the world, and give you up to the law, so I wanted to safeguard any chances against——"

"I know. Therefore, you took the guilt on yourself! Oh, was there ever such a dear, blundering Irishman in the world as you, Larry? I could have cried when I heard of it! How terrible, if they had not, already, got on to the true story! I love that detective for his patience and determination, and the neat way in which he followed up the real trail."

"Poor Jane! How frightfully she has been made to suffer!"

"We have a fellow-feeling for her!"

"You and I must go and see her when she is convalescent," said Larry.

"Indeed, we shall."

"And make her our *protégée* for life."

"Can we?" delightedly.

"We can, and shall."

"I am so glad! I am so happy that I want to do something for everyone I know."

"You will begin first with me," said he, kissing her with tender passion.

"Larry, do you know we have been here for half an hour?" Judy exclaimed, as a church clock chimed musically. "What will Mrs. Blythe think!"

"She knows all about it. I took the precaution of whispering a confidence in her ear before she left the dinner table, and I had hardly any patience to wait till our host made a move towards the drawing-room. Oh, she understands."

"I can scarcely believe," said Judy, "that we have nothing more to fear."

"And can marry and live happily ever after!" Larry put in. "Are you sure that Ali Bux won't get off?"

"He cannot—not even if he has the best counsel in the land, for he has confessed everything."

"I wonder what made him do that?"

"Men of his type often 'throw up the sponge' when they feel that there is no hope. His attitude is now one of defiance, for he declares that he has

had his revenge on Kennedy Sahib, and that is all that matters. The law might, now, do as it wills; he has no regrets. But why speak of Ali Bux and waste the precious moments! Rather let us plan for to-morrow."

"I think it is time we went in," she said, hiding her face on his breast.

THE END

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Little Pardner. Eleanor H. Porter.
Little Red Foot, The. Robert W. Chambers.
Little Ships. Kathleen Norris.
Little White Hag, The. Francis Beeding.
Locked Book, The. Frank L. Packard.
Lone Hand, The. Joseph B. Ames.
Lone Wolf, The. Louis Joseph Vance.
Long Live the King. Mary Roberts Rinehart.
Loring Mystery, The. Jeffery Farnol.
Lost World, The. A. Conan Doyle.
Loudon from Laramie. Joseph B. Ames.
Luck of the Kid, The. Ridgwell Cullum.
Lucky in Love. Berta Ruck.
Lucretia Lombard. Kathleen Norris.
Lydia of the Pines. Honore Willsie.
Lynch Lawyers. William Patterson White.

Madame Claire. Susan Ertz.

Major, The. Ralph Connor.
Man and Maid. Elinor Glyn.
Man from Bar-20, The. Clarence E. Mulford.
Man from El Paso, The. W. D. Hoffman.
Man from Smiling Pass, The. Eliot H. Robinson.
Man They Couldn't Arrest, The. Austin J. Small.
Man They Hanged, The. Robert W. Chambers.
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Martin Conisby's Vengeance. Jeffery Farnol.
Mary-'Gusta. Joseph C. Lincoln.
Master of Man. Hall Caine.
Master of the Microbe, The. Robert W. Service.
Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes. A. Conan Doyle.
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Michael's Evil Deeds. E. Phillips Oppenheim.
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Miracle. Clarence B. Kelland.
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Money, Love and Kate. Eleanor H. Potter.
Money Moon, The. Jeffery Farnol.
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Mr. Grex of Monte Carlo. E. Phillips Oppenheim.
Mr. Pratt. Joseph C. Lincoln.
Mr. Pratt's Patients. Joseph C. Lincoln.
Mr. Wu. Louise Jordan Miln.
Mrs. Red Pepper. Grace S. Richmond.
My Best Girl. Kathleen Norris.
My Lady of the North. Randall Parrish.
My Lady of the South. Randall Parrish.
Mystery of the Sycamore. Carolyn Wells.
Mystery Road, The. E. Phillips Oppenheim.

Ne'er-Do-Well, The. Rex Beach.
Net, The. Rex Beach.
Night Hawk. Arthur Stringer.
Night Horseman, The. Max Brand.
Night Operator, The. Frank L. Packard.
Nina. Susan Ertz.
No. 17. J. Jefferson Fairjeon.
Nobody's Man. E. Phillips Oppenheim.
No Defence. Gilbert Parker.
North. James B. Hendryx.

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